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Don't enrol voters for schemes, parties told

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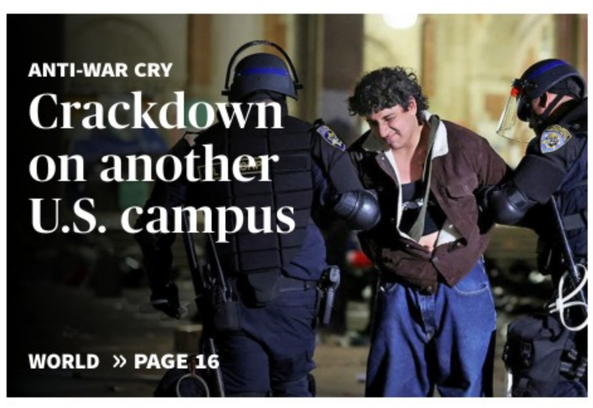

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***The Hindu* wins awards at design competition**

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Does Jan Arogya Yojana need a design change?

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HAVING THE LAST LAUGH

Sunrisers pip Royals in last-ball thriller

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Prajwal booked for rape; lookout circular issued

Karnataka govt. asks PM to cancel MP's diplomatic passport, appeals to victims to come forward; his father, also named in harassment and kidnap cases, skips SIT summons, seeks anticipatory bail

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU/KALABURGI/
NEW DELHI

The Karnataka Police booked Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna on rape charges on Thursday, and issued a lookout circular against the "absconding" MP a day after he failed to appear before the Special Investigation Team (SIT) that is probing his alleged sexual crimes.

His father and former Minister H.D. Revanna, who also skipped the SIT summons, approached a court in Bengaluru seeking anticipatory bail.

The charges against the grandson of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda were filed after a second woman filed a complaint that she was "coerced to have sexual relationship" with him. Based on the complaint, Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code, that deals with rape, has been invoked against the MP.

Burning issue: A Congress protest in Bengaluru on Thursday night seeking action against Prajwal Revanna. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

He has previously been booked for sexual harassment on the basis of another woman's complaint on April 28. His father is also named in the first case. According to sources, a new FIR was filed on Thursday evening against Mr. Revanna for kidnap. He allegedly played a role in abducting one of the victims of Mr. Prajwal, they added.

Earlier in the day, Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwara said a second victim had come forward and lodged a complaint against Mr. Prajwal. The Minister also appealed to other victims, especially those who were allegedly featured in explicit videos which are being circulated through social media, to come forward and make statements before the SIT. He said the government would ensure their safety and protect their identity.

The MP is believed to have left the country using his diplomatic passport on April 27, a day after the elections. He is now believed to be in Germany.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has already urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to cancel his diplomatic passport and bring him back to "face the full force of law."

CONTINUED ON
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India protests Chinese road construction in PoK valley

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

India has registered its protest with Beijing against China's "illegal attempts" to "alter facts on the ground" in the Shaksgam valley of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, which faces the Siachen glacier, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal was responding to questions on Chinese road construction in the valley.

"The Shaksgam valley is a part of the territory of India. We have never accepted the so-called China Pakistan Boundary Agreement of 1963 through which Pakistan unlawfully attempted to cede the area to China, and have consistently conveyed our rejection of the same," Mr. Jaiswal said at a briefing.

CONTINUED ON
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City receives rain after five months of dry spell

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

After a parched period of five months and nine days, many parts of Bengaluru received rain on Thursday evening. Rain lashed Banashankari, Vijayanagar, Ulsoor, Indiranagar, and Frazer Town, while many other areas received light to moderate rainfall.

Varuna Mitra, the 24x7 help desk of Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre, showed that Bengaluru City (BBMP limits) received 4.3 mm rainfall as of 8.45 p.m.

The rainfall details (zone-wise) data showed that the South Zone received 7.27 mm rainfall, Bommanahalli Zone 0 mm, Mahadevapura Zone 3.25 mm, West Zone 4.88 mm, Dasarahalli 2.63 mm, Rajarajeshwarinagar 6 mm, East Zone 1.96 mm and Yelahanka Zone received 2 mm rainfall as of 8.45 pm.

A streak of lightning over Bengaluru as the city received the much-awaited showers on Thursday. BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

Bengaluru last received rain on November 23, and since then, the city has witnessed dry weather conditions, with temperatures reaching record highs on many occasions.

Some parts of the city received drizzle on April 19 and 20. However, the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) observation data recorded at 5.30 p.m. on April 19 stated that the three stations—Bengaluru City, Kempegowda International Airport, and HAL Airport – received 0 mm rainfall.

Likewise, on April 20, Bengaluru city recorded 0 mm rainfall and the two other stations recorded trace (less than 0.2 mm) rainfall.

The IMD observatory recorded 0 mm of rainfall in April. This phenomenon was last observed in 1983. Since then, there has been rainfall in April every year.

CONTINUED ON
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Law and order is a State subject, says SC on Bengal's suit

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday categorically said law and order is a State subject after the State of West Bengal complained that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) claims "unilateral right" to investigate offences committed by Central employees within State jurisdiction.

"Law and order is a State subject. Suppose a Central employee commits dacoity, will the case be investigated by the CBI only?" Justice B.R. Gavai queried. Justice Sandeep Mehta, also on the two-judge Bench, said when Army personnel commit offences even within their camp, officers hand over the culprits to the police.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for West Bengal, said "their intent is to get in through the CBI, then use the Directorate of Enforcement [ED] and then do whatever is to be done... This has far-reaching repercussions".

Another Bench of the Supreme Court is tackling a similar question of law related to Tamil Nadu in the case of Ankit Tiwari, an ED officer against whom the T.N. Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption had launched a criminal prosecution for bribery.

The ED had approached the top court claiming the case be transferred to it as Mr. Tiwari was a Central government employee.

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METROPLUS » PAGE 5

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Phase-4: 09-06-2024 to 10-06-2024 (Rank : 70001 - 100000)
Phase-5: 11-06-2024 onwards (Rank : More than 1 Lakh)
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Wrestler Anshu confident of a good show at Paris Olympics

She talks about the work put in to return from injury, her inspiration Vinesh Phogat and the belief of securing the remaining quota places at the qualifiers

SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP & GETTY IMAGES

Y.B. Sarangi

Three more years of experience, improved muscle mass and more maturity have helped former World championships silver medallist wrestler Anshu Malik grow in confidence in the run-up to the Paris Olympics.

Anshu, who overcame a frustrating knee injury which kept her out of the mat for most part of the last year, has rode on her better fitness level to bounce back in style to assert herself first at the competitive domestic level and then at the Asian Olympic Games qualifier in Bishkek to secure her second consecutive Olympic qualification in women's 57kg.

While remaining focused on her training with an aim of achieving her peak by the time of the Olympics, the 22-year-old, who had crashed out in the first round in the Tokyo Games in 2021, is quietly confident about her ability to medal this time in Paris.

Looking back at her injury lay-off, which coincided with the wrestlers' protest and the negativity surrounding Indian wrestling last year, Anshu said her positivity pushed her ahead.

"In the last Asian championships (in Astana, Kazakhstan, in April 2023) I picked up the injury (while winning a bronze). I began training early for the Asian Games, but I again got injured 10 days prior to the Asian Games trials. It was a tough time because of such a long lay-off and I wanted to make a comeback as 2024 was an important year because of the Olympics. I stayed positive, I thought if the injury had happened there must be something good in it," Anshu told *The Hindu*.

"An athlete needs to leave behind all sorts of negativity and go forward positively. We needed to remain mentally strong and keep fighting. Whatever be the situation, we have to accept it and move forward. Sport teaches us that."

Planned approach

A planned approach helped Anshu become fighting fit. "After returning from injury, I had planned my comeback, which competition I should participate in and for how much duration I should train. It has been going on smoothly as per my plans.

"We have planned it well (to reach my peak around the Olympics). That's why I fought the Nationals in 59kg. I had put on a lot of weight, my body weight was around 68kg-69kg, after the injury. I had to cut that. Had I cut down to 57kg, then the chances of injury would have increased. Everyone recommended that I should fight at 59kg, because in trials there was a two kg tolerance. I maintained 59kg even after the trials so that I don't face any problems during the Asian Olympic qualifier. Meanwhile, I went to Japan for training and there I learnt a lot and noticed improvement in my game. I know how much work I need to do for myself.

"My fitness level is much better now, my body is in good shape. After coming back from the knee injury, I had some apprehensions as I had not competed for a while. I competed in the National championships and selection trials (for the Asian Olympic qualifier). Slowly I grew in confidence," said Anshu.

Elaborating on the benefits of her training in Japan, Anshu said, "When I went there I found Olympic and World champions in training. When you train with the legends, you learn where to work. In our academy, I train with the boys. Some days when I do well and feel great about it. Some other days when I don't do well, I get disheartened. In Japan I found champions in 53kg, 57kg, 62kg etc. So when I fought with them, I got an idea where I stood and on which areas I should work on and how much work was needed.

"Japan is a leading country in women's wrestling. When you compete with their wrestlers, you get to know where you lag.

"I will go to Japan again next week for training but for the trials we have to return early. We have planned a 40-day training schedule."

Much wiser

Anshu has become much wiser since the last Olympics. "At that time I was younger. My muscle mass was less. I was training but it was not enough. After the Tokyo Olympics, I got to know where I stood and what were the areas of improvement. Now I have been trying to avoid the mistakes I made in the past.

"I can feel the difference. My strength has increased and a lot of work has gone into techniques. A lot of work has gone into the mistakes I used to make. Now you can say my peak is coming."

Anshu, who is working with a psychologist on her mental health and focus, knows that she needs to work harder than ever to give a memorable performance in a weight packed with several strong athletes.

"In the Olympics, we cannot think someone is strong or weak. A lot of strong wrestlers are there in my weight from countries like Japan, USA, Nigeria and Moldova. Since 57kg is a middleweight category, the competition is more. Hopefully, I will rectify my mistakes and go for a medal this time."

Through the ups and downs in her career, Anshu has been blessed to have the solid support of her father Dharamvir. "He has been very supportive all through. He has been behind me since the time I started wrestling. I am where I am because of him. He will continue to be with me all the time."

Four high quality wrestlers, Vinesh (50kg), Antim Panghal (53kg) and Reetika (76kg) and herself (57kg), have already qualified for the Olympics. Anshu feels Indian women are capable enough to win the remaining two quota places at the World Olympic Games qualifier, scheduled in Istanbul from May 9 to 12.

"Last time four Indian women had qualified. This time four have qualified as well. In 62kg and 68kg, we could have qualified as well but our wrestlers lost narrowly in Bishkek. Hopefully, we qualify in all six weights and do really well in Paris."

Watching a seasoned campaigner like two-time World championships medallist Vinesh Phogat, who cut down her weight drastically to win an Olympic quota place in 50kg in Bishkek, from close quarters was also an education for the young Anshu.

"For a wrestler, more than wrestling on the mat, controlling one's weight is a bigger challenge. We get motivated that she (Vinesh) has come down to a lower weight category after coming back from an injury. Having returned from an injury, I can understand what an athlete could have gone through. When you cut down weight, then your strength also goes down and weakness comes in. As an athlete, I can consider her a role model as she has come back despite knowing that there could be another injury by losing weight. Seeing her dedication, we get motivation to achieve something noteworthy," said Anshu, managed by IOS, with a lot of optimism.

THE GIST

- Anshu, a former World championships silver medallist, has overcome a frustrating knee injury, which kept her out of action, for most part of 2023, to win a quota place in women's 57kg in the Asian Olympic Games qualifier in Bishkek and ensure India's presence in that weight in Paris 2024
- With more experience and improved muscle mass, the 22-year-old, who competed in the Tokyo Olympics, is working on her game to get better for the Olympics
- She acknowledges that a training stint in Japan, a superpower in women's wrestling, has helped her immensely

From Page One

City receives rain after five months of dry spell

On Thursday evening, IMD issued a nowcast stating that light to moderate thundershowers accompanied by lightning and gusty wind with speeds reaching 30-40 kmph are likely at isolated places over Bengaluru Urban and Bengaluru Rural districts. During the summer months of March, April and May, Bengaluru city normally receives a rainfall of 205.1 mm. Last year, during these three months, Bengaluru received 67% above normal rainfall, which is an all-time high, as the city received 342.6 mm. However in 2024, during March and April Bengaluru received 0 mm.

E-paper edition

The Hindu offers more coverage of Bengaluru in the e-paper edition. (epaper.thehindu.com)

In the issue dated May 3, we have an Explainer on how Muslims were given quotas under OBC reservation in Karnataka. Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing a poll rally in Rajasthan's Tonk-Sawai Madhopur Lok Sabha constituency on April 23, accused the Congress of "snatching the reservation of SCs, STs and OBCs and providing it to Muslims through the backdoor", tying it up with his charge that "Congress would redistribute the wealth of people to Muslims".

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (May 3, Friday), the following articles are available:

- Why are Indian spices facing the heat? **bit.ly/spicesuspends**
- A computer science conundrum that could transform healthcare **bit.ly/computerconundrum**

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access an article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

Bengaluru Urban records 41.1°C: KSNDMC data

However, IMD observation data states that three stations—Bengaluru City, Kempegowda International Airport, and HAL airport — had a maximum of 38.2 °C, 39.1°C and 38.2°C respectively

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Karnataka State Natural Disaster Management Centre (KSNDMC) district-wise minimum and maximum temperatures recorded from 8.30 a.m. on Wednesday to 8.30 a.m. on Thursday showed that Bengaluru Urban recorded a maximum of 41.1 °C and a minimum of 24.3°C.

However, the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) observation data recorded at 5.30 p.m. on Thursday stated that the three stations–Bengaluru City, Kempegowda International Airport, and HAL airport – had a maximum of 38.2 °C, 39.1 °C and 38.2°C respectively, while the minimum recorded temperature was 25.5°C, 26.3°C and 25°C respectively.

The variation between the KSNDMC data and IMD's data is because the former has more observatories when compared to the latter. "IMD records data only in three locations, whereas our data is captured from 18 locations. We are able to capture local factors and we are able to get more diverse data and more variability," said a KSNDMC official.

This was on a day when many parts of Bengaluru received rain on Thursday evening after a parched five months and seven days.

The IMD local forecast for Bengaluru City and neighbourhood issued on Thursday at 6 p.m. states that for the next 36 hours, there would be a partly cloudy sky and maximum and minimum temperatures very likely to be around 39°C and 25°C respectively.

The variation between the KSNDMC data and IMD's data is because the former has more observatories when compared to the latter

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Bengaluru has issued a heat wave warning on May 2 till May 6 for Belagavi, Bidar, Dharwad, Gadag, Kalaburagi, Haveri, Koppal, Raichur, Yadgir, Ballari, Bengaluru Urban, Chamarajanagar, Chickballapur, Chitradurga, Davangere, Tumakuru, Mandya, and Mysuru districts.

A child is almost fully covered to protect it from the blazing sun at Rajajinagar in Bengaluru on Thursday.
SUDHAKARA JAIN

Consumers complain of power cuts

Jahnavi T. R.
BENGALURU

While the sweltering heat has already made life more difficult in Bengaluru, in the last few days, citizens have reported that the situation has been worsened by power cuts, especially at night. Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (Bescom) officials, while maintaining that there is no load-shedding this summer, said the increased demand and consumption, along with high temperatures, have taken a toll on the distribution infrastructure.

Peak demand of 8,381 megawatts

Bescom has seen a record peak demand of 8,381 megawatts (MW) in April. The demand was recorded at 11.22 a.m. on April 30. In 2023, the peak demand for April was 7,800 MW. A similar peak demand was also recorded in March (8,232 MW), more than the previous year's (7,740 MW).

"We can assure you there is no load-shedding, but the distribution system has been overloaded. There are also some interruptions when the transformer in the substation or the distribution transformers in residential localities catch fire or break down because of extreme heat outside. It takes time to repair them and restore power. But our officials do it as quickly as possible," a senior official from Bescom told *The Hindu*.

However, citizens are irked by the unscheduled power cuts. "For three days, there was no power for over two hours in the middle of the night. It is almost impossible to go a few minutes without a fan these days and these power cuts are also robbing us of our sleep," said Jeevan. M., a resident of Ramagondanahalli, near Yelahanka.

Similar complaints are reported in parts of Jayanagar, J.P. Nagar, HSR Layout, Marathahalli, and other parts of East Bengaluru. "Somehow, the power cuts occur only in the night. Even though we have power back up inverters, multiple fans cannot run on it and hence, it has become a major inconvenience at night," said Shrisha M., a resident of Jayanagar.

Temporary relief for BWSSB from refunding crores collected as GBWSSP, BCC charges

FROM THE COURT

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a temporary relief to the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), a Division Bench of the High Court of Karnataka on Thursday stayed the direction given by a single judge to refund Greater Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Project (GBWSSP) charges and the Beneficiary Capital Contribution (BCC) charges collected from residents and the commercial ventures respectively in areas newly added to the city.

The BWSSB had collected hundreds of crores of rupees under GBWSSP and BCC from all types of buildings, including old and new residential buildings, based on the size of the site in the seven city municipal councils and one town municipal council that were added to the city limits, for providing drinking water and underground drainage facilities.

A Vacation Bench comprising Justice B.M. Shyam Prasad and T.G. Shivashankare Gowda passed the interim order on an appeal filed by the BWSSB, which had challenged the April 5 judgement of the single judge Bench.

The Bench also stayed the direction given by the single judge to the Court's registry to refund the amount deposited by the petitioners, who had questioned the legality of GBWSSP and BCC, during the pendency of their petitions before the single judge.

The single judge had held GBWSSP and BCC charges as illegal as there exists no provision in the Bangalore Water and Sewerage Sanitary Act, 1964 to levy the charges like BCC and GBWSSP.

However, the single judge had said the State or the BWSSB can bring in these charges, which are held to be illegal under the provisions of the Act and the Bangalore Water Supply Regulations, 1965 by making suitable amendments to the Act, or the regulations.

More companies show interest in purchasing zero-bacterial water

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has started supplying zero bacterial treated water to Wipro at Kodati after the water board adopted advanced technology to generate bacteria-free water in its treatment plans. The board will be supplying 3 lakh litres of water every day to Wipro using water tankers.

Other IT parks

After Wipro, about 40 more IT parks have shown interest in purchasing the water, and a discussion on the same is underway, said a BWSSB release.

BWSSB Chairman, Ram Prasath Manohar said the IT companies use water for cooling. The water can be used for cleaning, washing, and other purposes. Every day, BWSSB generates 1 crore litres of zero bacterial water. The BWSSB has 34 treatment plants.

Mr. Manohar said the scientists from IISC, in two weeks, developed advanced technology to generate bacteria-free water. He said the BWSSB will also look into increasing the generation capacity of this quality of water.

Man stabs wife to death in Koramangala

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 28-year-old woman was allegedly stabbed to death by her husband over a domestic row on the busy Koramangala 6th block road in broad daylight.

The deceased, identified as Indu, a resident of Srinivagilu, was staying at her mother's house in Venkatapura. She was working as a salesgirl in a retail grocery chain in Koramangala. The accused, identified as Michael Francis, was a car spray painter and is presently on the run.

According to the police, Francis and Indu were married for 12 years and had two children. Francis being an alcoholic used to have frequent fights with Indu suspecting her fidelity. Unable to bear, Indu moved to her parents' house along with her children six months ago.

The accused used to visit her workplace and fight with her, creating a ruckus. The victim had even approached the Koramangala police on Wednesday, requesting them to call her husband and warn him not to bother her at workplace. Francis did not attend to the phone calls. On Thursday, she reportedly approached the police, following which the police called Francis and asked him to visit the station regarding his wife's complaint. He reportedly informed the police that he would appear after work.

Indu was returning to work from the station around 3:15 p.m. when Francis allegedly waylaid her, stabbed her on the back, neck, and both hands multiple times, and escaped. Indu was talking to her motherover the phone at the time of the incident. Sensing danger, Sujatha immediately called the police helpline 112. The Hoysala police rushed to the spot and shifted her to St. John's Hospital, where doctors declared her brought dead. The police have filed a murder case against Francis and efforts are on to track him down.

Jharkhand Urja Sancharan Nigam Ltd.
(CIN: U40108JH2013SGC001704)
Regd. Office: 2nd Floor, JUSNL (SLDC) Building, Kusai Colony, Doranda, Ranchi-02
(E-mail:cetjusnl@gmail.com)

2nd TIME EXTENSION NOTICE

Important date against NIT No. 737/PR/JUSNL/2023-24 for Procurement of Battery Set for various GSS in JUSNL is hereby extended in following manner : -

End date and time of upload of BID	14.05.2024 up to 04:00 PM
BID Opening date for technical & commercial part	15.05.2024 at 04.00 PM

This extension notice is also available on the website **www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in**

स्वहित एवं राष्ट्रहित में ऊर्जा बचावें। कृपया अपनी शिकायतों को 18003456570 (कॉल सेन्टर) पर दर्ज करायें।

PR No. 322880

Sd/-
General Manager, C&M (NWBP)
JUSNL, Ranchi

PR 324301 Jharkhand Urja Sancharan Nigam Ltd (24-25)_D

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified that my client has agreed to purchase the Schedule Property from its Owner, **Smt.B.C.RAMYA W/o Sri.B.K.Vishwanath,** residing at: No.30, Poonam Kailash Apartment, 1st Floor, 2nd Stage, 5th Main, Basaveshwaranagar, KHB Colony, Bangalore-560079.

Apart from the said Owner, if any other person/s have any manner of right, title and or interest or claim or charge or lien over the Schedule property or otherwise have any lawful objection/s for sale of the Schedule Property by the aforesaid Owner, they are hereby called upon to file their objection/s in writing, along with the photocopies of documents on which they rely, with the undersigned, within 14 days from the date of publication of this notice. Objection/s received thereafter will not be binding on my client.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the residential property bearing Municipal No.407 (CITB/BDA Site No.407) PID No.16-1-407, measuring East to West 40 ft and North to South 30 ft, with a building thereon comprised of stilt, ground plus two upper floors, situated at West of Chord Road, 3rd Stage, 4th Block, (Basaveshwara Nagar), Bangalore and bounded on:

East by : Road
West by : Site No.422
North by : Site No.408
South by : Site No.406

Sd/- **S.F. GOUTAM CHAND**
Advocate
GOUTAM ASSOCIATES
No.60, 2nd Floor, Kanakapura Road,
Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560 004.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that our clients **Mrs. K.KUSUMA** W/o. Mr.Harinath Gowda and **MR.G ANAND GOSBAL** S/o.Mr.G Mahalingappa are intending to purchase the schedule property mentioned hereunder from **MR.C. PRASAD @ PRASAD CHITRAJU** S/o. Mr.C Purushothama Raju; any person/s, Bank, Financial Institutions etc objecting for the proposed purchase or are having any right, title, interest or any type of claim over the scheduled property is hereby called upon to file their objections/claims what so ever along with documentary proof on or before **7 days** from the date of publication of this notice with the under mentioned advocate failing which; our client shall proceed and complete the sale transaction with the above stated person.

PROPERTY SCHEDULE:

All that piece and parcel of the **Site No.13,** BBMP Katha No. 807/651/583/13, Old Katha No.583, formed out of converted Sy. No30/2, vide Converted to non-agriculture purpose vide its Official Memorandum No.B.DIS.ALN.SR(N)155/1988-89, dated 26.05.1989, converted from Special Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Situated at **Kodigehalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk,** Measuring East to West: 40 Feet and North to South:55 Feet, in all measuring 2200 Square Feet, BBMP Limits and bounded on the:

East by : Property bearing No.12; West by : Property bearing No.14; North by : Property bearing No.8; South by : 25 Feet Road;

C.K.V.K. LAW ASSOCIATES
Mr. VENKATESH CHANDRAN M.A., L.L.B.
Advocates & Legal Consultants Bangalore-43
M: 9845846428, 080-48658774

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public at large that my client Ms. Nedee Bhudolia D/o. Deepak Kumar Bhudolia residing at No.69, Officer Model Colony, T.Dasarahalli, Near Ayyappa Temple, Bangalore North, Dasarahalli, Bangalore-560057 intends to purchase the property bearing Site No.204, in the layout formed by Athmeya Gelayara Balaga House Building Co-operative Society Niyamitha of 3rd stage, Khata No. 766 situated at Chikkasandra Village, Yeshwanthpura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk and as detailed in the schedule hereunder. The said property is presently owned by one Mrs.Puttiah Girija w/o. Late K.Narasimhaiah, Mrs. Deepthi K.N and Sri Deepak Khadri Narasimhaiah who are jointly residing at No.167, 41st Main, 4th Cross, Near Central Silk Board, BTM Layout, 2nd Stage, Bommanahalli, Bangalore South, Bangalore-560068. Further on 24/04/2024 there has been an Agreement of Sale executed which is registered before the Sub-Registrar's office, Peenya bearing Document No.BKI 604/24-25. The original owners had lost the title deed of the property i.e., Sale Deed dated 01/03/2012 bearing document No. 10480/11-12 registered before Sub-Registrar's Office, Peenya, Bengaluru i.e., the sale deed which was originally executed between one G.Venkatesh and K.Narasimhaiah (late husband of Mrs.Puttiah Girija). The owners as stated supra represent themselves as absolute owners of the schedule property and no other persons have claim on the said schedule property. If any persons claiming or has objection on the said sale, to lodge their claim within 7 days from the date of this notice with the undersigned, failing which, my client shall proceed with the above-mentioned transaction.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the property bearing Site No.204, carved out of land bearing converted Survey No. 9, 10/1, 10/2, 10/3, 10/4, 11/1, 11/2, 12/1, 12/2, 13, 14/1, 14/2, 14/3, 14/4, 14/6, 16/1, 16/2, 16/3, 17, 18, 19, 21/1, 21/2, 21/3, 21/4, 21/5, 21/6, 22, 23, 49 and 50 situated at Chikkasandra Village of BBMP Limits totally measuring 64 acres 6 guntas vide conversion order No. ALN (NY) SR: 1463/1965-66, dated 23/04/1966 in the layout formed by Athmeya Gelayara Balaga House Building Co-operative Society Niyamitha of 3rd stage, Khata No. 766 situated at Chikkasandra Village, Yeshwanthpura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk and bounded as follows:

East by:Site No.205,
West by: Site No.203,
North by: Park
South by: Road

-sd-
AKASH R Rao Advocate
No.555, "Anuroopa" 2nd Cross, Chokkasandra, Peenya Dasarahalli, Bangalore - 560 057.
Mob : 8971490479
E-mail: akashrameshrao@gmail.com
Dtd: 02-05-2024
Place: Bangalore

SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY
Follow us on @SCRailwayindia
Details of the Tender Notices of S.C.Railway can be seen on our website: www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
(through https://ireps.gov.in)
PUB/0400

CE/C-II/SC, CE/C-III /SC & CE/C-V/SC Construction Organisation, S.C.Railway, Secunderabad, respectively, invites e-tender on behalf of the President of India for the following works:

Sl.No.: 01 **NIT No.:** 13-CAO- C-SC-2024 Date:06/04/2024 **Name of work:** SCR Construction Organization- KZJ-BPQ section - Proposed construction of 3rd line with electrification between Kazipet - Balharshah stations - Last mile connectivity works in commissioning of sections between (a). Balharshah (BPQ) - Manikgarh (MAGH) section in Maharastra state and (b). Rechni Road(RECH) - Bellampalli (BPA) section in Telangana state - Additional quantity of supplying and stacking machine crushed clean, hard, angular and durable stone ballast"-reg. **Estimated Cost:** ₹ 2,79,42,174.00 **EMD:** ₹ 2,89,700.00 **Completion Period:** 05 (Five) Months **Date of Opening:** 14/05/2024 15:00 hrs.

Sl.No.: 02 **NIT No.:** 14-CAO- C-SC-2024 Date:06/04/2024 **Name of work:** SCR Construction Organization: Kotipalli-Narsapur New BG line- 1) Proposed identification and marking of Railway land boundries of already acquired Railway land. 2) Fixing of land boundary fencing with RCC posts and barbed wire along idetified railway boundries on both sides of Railway alignment from Kotipalli to Amalapurami,e Km 45/0 to Km 58/0 (Excluding Goutami bridge) and from Vasista bridge A2 to Narsapuri.e km 92/0 to km 101/0. **Estimated Cost:** ₹ 3,82,49,456.80 **EMD:** ₹ 3,41,300.00 **Completion Period:** 06 (Six) Months **Date of Opening:** 14/05/2024 15:00 hrs.

Sl.No.: 03 **NIT No.:** PMS-04-CAO-C-SC-2024 Date: 23/04/2024 **Name of work:** SCR Construction Organisation: Nanded Division-Appointment of Authority Engineer for providing Project Management Services(PMS) for "Construction Of Proposed Doubling of Track between Ankai Station(excluding) at Km 16.00 (Ch. 16000) &Karanjgaon Station (excluding) at Km. 69.01(Ch 69010) [i.e., (53.01 Km)] and between Karanjgaon Station (including) at Km. 69.01(Ch 69010) & Aurangabad Station(including) at Km 113.15(Ch 113150) [i.e., (44.14 Km)] including Electrification and Signaling Works in connection with Aurangabad-Ankai Doubling Project in Nanded Division of South Central Railway". **Estimated Cost:** ₹ 13,10,79,000.00 **EMD:** ₹ 8,05,400.00 **Completion Period:** 27 (Twenty Seven) Months **Date of Opening:** 30/05/2024 15:00 hrs.

Sl.No.: 04 **NIT No.:** PMS-05-CAO-C-SC-2024 Date: 23/04/2024 **Name of work:** SCR Construction Organisation: Nanded Division-Appointment of Authority Engineer for providing Project Management Services(PMS) for "Construction Of Proposed Doubling of Track from Parbhani to Parli stations (58.06Kms) (excluding Gangakhed yard from km 292.075 to km 298.85 =6.775 Km) including Electrification and signaling works in connection with Parbhani -Parli doubling project in Nanded Division of South Central Railway in the state of Maharashtra". **Estimated Cost:** ₹ 9,22,23,600.00 **EMD:** ₹ 6,11,100.00 **Completion Period:** 30 (Thirty) Months **Date of Opening:** 30/05/2024 15:00 hrs.

i) For bid document and other details, please login to website **https://ireps.gov.in.**

ii) Tenderers can submit their offers online during tender submission period which is the Fifteen days period prior to closing of tender.

iii) Tenderers should watch for any corrigenda (issued online only) up to the date of commencement of the tender submission period.

A0516 **Chief Administrative Officer/ Const./Secunderabad**

For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, please visit website at www.ireps.gov.in http://www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

ALWAYS FOREVER IN OUR LOVING MEMORY

Celebrating the beautiful life of
Smt. Malathi.V
DOD: 20-04-2024
W/o G. Venkatesh, Retd. Principal, Acharya College, Gauribidanur
Deeply Mourned By
Lion G Venkatesh LCB North Bangalore.
Children's: Mr Bharath Bhushan V, Madhu Sudhan, Divya Chetana & family, Relatives & Friends.
9880629965 / 9844227303
Kindly be present and pray for the departed soul.

VAIKUNTASAMARADANE
DATE
3rd May 2024, Friday
LUNCH
12.30 PM onwards
VENUE
Sagar Vajra
#13/1, Near Ashoka Pillar, 4th Cross, 2nd Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore.

DEATH

T A Srinivasan (83), Retired Assistant Editor, The Hindu, Chennai passed away on 01-May-2024.Address: 23/36 Kambar Street, S.S Colony, Madurai -625010. Contact: 9840145047

IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORY

NIDEESH.V.B
BBA, LLB (Hon's)
(School of Law,
Christ University, Bangalore)

You continue to live on in our hearts forever, your memories will always be cherished
Parents, Sisters, Cousins & Friends.

A computer science conundrum that could transform healthcare

While it may sound like a cryptic puzzle reserved for computer science mavens, the implications of the P versus NP problem stretch beyond algorithms and data structures, rippling through diverse fields, including antimicrobial resistance, cancer care, and medical insurance

C. Aravinda

Healthcare is filled with complex issues like assigning doctors and nurses to shifts, booking operating theatres for surgeries, and organising patient appointments. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

In the 17th century, a Dutch draper named Anton van Leeuwenhoek used a small handmade microscope to peer into a world previously unseen by the human eye. Thus he discovered microorganisms and gave rise to the field of microbiology. It offered solutions to challenges in healthcare that until then had seemed intractable.

Today, we face a new set of complex problems in healthcare that seem more intractable than others before for their inherent complexity and the constraints they threaten to impose on resources.

P versus NP

It so happens that an unsolved problem in computer science, simply called the P versus NP problem, could hold the key to these modern-day conundra. While it may sound like a cryptic puzzle reserved for computer science mavens, its implications stretch beyond algorithms and data structures, rippling through diverse fields including healthcare. But what exactly is this puzzle, and how could its resolution unlock a new era in medical science?

Let's start with a simple arithmetic example. Say you're asked to multiply 17 with 19. With some time, you'd arrive at the answer: 323. This is a 'P' problem: you can solve it reasonably quickly. ('P' stands for polynomial time.) Suppose you're presented with 323 and asked to identify the two prime numbers multiplied to get this. In this case, you will have to take the trial and error route until you arrive at 17 and 19. This is an 'NP' problem: it takes longer to solve, but once you have the solution, you can verify it quickly. ('NP' here is nondeterministic polynomial time.)

Healthcare is filled with complex issues. Consider scheduling in a hospital: assigning doctors and nurses to shifts, booking operating theatres for surgeries, and organising patient appointments. It is an intricate puzzle that requires considering various factors – staff availability, urgency of medical cases, etc. – and potential changes such as emergency cases and cancellations.

The P vs NP question is this: could there be a shortcut to solve 'NP' problems as quickly as 'P' problems? Because the implication is that if P equals NP, we could quickly find the optimal solution to these scheduling problems, thus significantly improving patient care.

The implications of resolving this question are profound and wide-reaching, including for healthcare.

Implications for healthcare

The P vs NP question is a problem in mathematics and computer science, but that does not mean it will be confined there. If an existing problem can be given a faithful mathematical representation and is found to be an 'NP' problem, the shortcut in question could help by turning it into a 'P' problem.

For example, antibiotic resistance is a significant global health concern. If P equals NP, we may have a way to quickly analyse bacterial genomes and predict their resistance patterns, helping doctors prescribe the most effective antibiotics. This would improve patient outcomes and help combat antibiotic resistance, including new antibiotics discoveries for emerging diseases. Of course, patients' adherence will still matter.

Cancer is a complex disease with myriad mutations. Deciding the best treatment plan is an NP problem because it involves considering all possible combinations of drugs and therapies. If P equals NP, we may have an opportunity to swiftly identify the optimal treatment for each individual cancer patient and potentially save many lives. The catch here is that we will still need a large volume of data.

Insurance companies grapple with NP problems when they have to determine premiums and packages based on considering numerous variables like age, health status, lifestyle, and medical history. Having a shortcut to crack the P vs NP problem could help these companies optimise their decision-making and pave the way to fairer and more accurate premiums and conditions. Further, government spending on healthcare can also be utilised with minimal leakage while programmes like Ayushman Bharat can contribute more effectively to achieving universal health coverage.

By solving these complex problems more efficiently, we could potentially dramatically reduce resource constraints and improve health outcomes.

Surprising sources of progress

While the P vs NP problem is a topic of ongoing study in computer science, the consensus among most experts is that P probably does not equal NP, implying that some problems will remain very difficult to crack, even if a solution – once it is found – will be easier to verify. But this has not deterred researchers from exploring this question, and in the pursuit of which they have unearthed improvements to algorithms and new approaches to dealing with complex problems.

> If P equals NP, we may have a way to quickly analyse bacterial genomes and predict their resistance patterns, helping doctors prescribe the most effective antibiotics. This would improve patient outcomes and combat antibiotic resistance

Throughout history, there have been many instances of seemingly insurmountable problems being overcome with innovative thinking. Before the discovery of electricity, for example, candlemakers lit our world. Yet most of them may never have foreseen the revolutionary consequences of Thomas Edison's incandescent bulb, which brought light to more people and for longer hours.

Similarly, following the invention of calculus and expanding the binomial theorem to negative integers and fractions, Isaac Newton considerably improved our understanding of the irrational number pi. Why, the technology giant Apple has been transforming our expectations of what a watch can be expected to do in ways that Swiss watchmakers may never have anticipated.

Not all will be winners

This said, one potential drawback of P being equal to NP, if ever that outcome comes to pass, lies in the realm of cryptography. Many encryption schemes and algorithms rely on problems that are currently hard to solve, believed to be in the set of 'NP', not 'P' problems. That is, these schemes protect secrets by hiding them behind a problem that is very hard to solve but easy to verify. If P equals NP, these problems will become easy to solve, rendering these encryption schemes vulnerable to attacks and compromising digital security.

This said, healthcare isn't the sole beneficiary of this problem-solving. The barrier that the P vs NP problem stands for encompasses every field where the solution to a problem is blocked by the availability of significant computational resources. So these fields include logistics, finance, and even climate modelling, all of which could experience paradigm shifts if the P vs NP problem is solved in favour of the P = NP outcome.

The Clay Mathematics Institute in Colorado continues to offer a million dollars to anyone who can definitively solve the P vs NP problem. But for anyone who does, a million dollars will pale in comparison to the rewards they stand to collect by revolutionising various human enterprises, potentially driving human progress in unimaginable ways.

As we look to the future, let us remember that problems that seem insurmountable today might not be so tomorrow. As with the candlemakers, the watchmakers, and even Anton van Leeuwenhoek, the solution often comes from where we least expect it. Today's brightest minds grappling with the P vs NP problem may be on the brink of a breakthrough that could redefine healthcare as we know it.

(Dr C. Aravinda is a public health physician and student at IIT Madras pursuing a BS degree in data science.)

Liquid nitrogen being poured from a container into a bowl. CORY DOCTOROW/FLICKR

Liquid nitrogen in foods draws Tamil Nadu's ire, yet again

R. Sujatha

A week ago, a video of a child screaming went viral on social media. There were visuals of adults spewing white smoke from their mouth and nose. What the child said was garbled but it was soon apparent the child had consumed a food item infused with liquid nitrogen.

Television channels and online media took up the issue. The Tamil Nadu government issued an advisory banning the use of liquid nitrogen in food and warned of stringent action against violators.

In 1991, *The Hindu* reported that a London-based company developed a system to improve the quality and shelf life of food by introducing droplets of liquid nitrogen in the packaging. When nitrogen evaporates, it displaces oxygen in the food pack, preventing microbial action and preserving freshness.

The technique was useful in packing coffee, potato crisps, peanuts and peanut butter, milk products, cheese, and dried potatoes, the article said.

As with every novelty, some chefs also experimented with liquid nitrogen to make food more interesting. In 2016, a few upmarket restaurants and eateries in Chennai and elsewhere used it to entice customers.

But in August 2017, the then Union Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan said in Rajya Sabha the government would investigate the addition of liquid nitrogen

> **The Tamil Nadu Food Safety Department has issued a circular on the use of liquid nitrogen saying the substance can only be used to preserve packaged food**

in food and drinks served in some restaurants.

Six months ago, in Tiruchirappalli, a vendor's shop was sealed after authorities found liquid nitrogen in food, the city's designated food safety officer said.

"Liquid nitrogen, an inert, colourless, odourless cryogenic fluid has traditionally been used in the management of many benign pre-cancers and cancers since the 1960s," Arvind Krishnamurthy, professor and head of surgical oncology at the Adyar Cancer Institute, said. "This form of treatment is generally used to manage cancers wherein conventional surgery is not possible or can be used as an adjunct to conventional surgery."

The procedure involves using the element at a frosty -196 degrees C to freeze and destroy cancer cells. "The treatment is scientifically described as cryotherapy. It can also be used to obtain biopsies from cancer tissues for further molecular analysis. Another application is to use it as cryo-adhesion to remove foreign bodies," he explained.

Cryotherapy has been attempted to treat many cancers, including those of skin, bone, breast, cervical, eye, kidney, liver, lung, and prostate.

"Liquid nitrogen should be handled by trained professionals with proper protective gear, preferably in a controlled lab or industry, as improper handling or consumption of liquid nitrogen can cause severe damage to the skin, mucous membranes, and internal organs," the surgeon said.

A day after the viral video, the Tamil Nadu Food Safety Department cited the Food Safety and Standards Regulations, and the Drug Administration department issued a circular on the use of liquid nitrogen saying the substance can only be used to preserve packaged food.

The department also warned of stringent action, including fines and legal proceedings, if it is used for other purposes.

(*sujatha.r@thehindu.co.in*)

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Please send in your answers to science@thehindu.co.in

Revisiting malaria and its unique challenges

Saumya Kalia

QUESTION 1

Malaria is caused by parasites transmitted through the bite of this category of emale mosquito, discovered in 1897 by a British doctor. Name the mosquito and the doctor.

QUESTION 2

Which country contributes to more than half of the malaria cases in the World Health Organisation's administrative Southeast Asia region?

QUESTION 3

Global warming, population displacement, and insecticide resistance are expected to speed up malaria transmission. Identify the cheapest and most-used antimalarial drug to which mosquitoes have become resistant over time.

QUESTION 4

This country made history in 2024 by launching the world's first malaria vaccine as part of its immunisation programme. Name the country and the vaccine.

QUESTION 5

Which vaccine manufacturer has currently established production capacity for the second malaria vaccine, called R21/Matrix M?

Answers to May 1 quiz:

1. Line beyond which human activity is astronautic – **Ans: Karman line**
2. Line above which exposed water boils away – **Ans: Armstrong line**
3. Conditions in which water vapour bubbles accumulate in body's fluids – **Ans: Ebullism**
4. Entity of which around 1% is lost in every month in space – **Ans: Bone**
5. Terrestrial counterpart of space adaptation syndrome – **Ans: Motion sickness**

Visual: Gemini 11

First contact: Vijayram Ganasala | ViswanadhaRao Batchu | Shiva Nigam

Visual: This chemist in 1939 identified the insecticidal properties of DDT, an achievement that later won him a Nobel Prize. Name him. PUBLIC DOMAIN

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

Confusion in college admissions as govt.'s decision on NEP, SEP remains unclear

Technical glitches in the Unified University College Management System portal to apply online are also adding to the confusion

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

The lack of clarity in the Karnataka government's decision regarding the admissions to degree courses for the year 2024-25, and the technical glitches in the Unified University College Management System (UUCMS) portal to apply online, has resulted in students and parents struggling this admission season.

The degree colleges have distributed applications (hard copies) to the students and started the enrollment process and students have been advised to apply online again after activation of the UUCMS portal. Students now have to apply twice.

"First, I have applied for a BA course in a Government First Grade College in Bengaluru. However, since it is mandatory to apply online and pay the fee online on the UUCMS portal, the authorities have suggested that we apply again after the portal is activated. But when we inquired from the college whether we should apply for a four-year degree course or three-year degree course, there was no clear answer," said Sachin (name changed), a student.

Students are in limbo as they get no clear answers from colleges on whether to apply for a four-year degree course or a three-year one. FILE PHOTO

Even as 22 days have passed since the announcement of the II PU Exam-1 result, the UUCMS portal is yet to be opened. As a result, educational institutions have started the admission process by distributing applications. Many private universities and colleges have also allegedly allowed students to "block seats" by charging a certain fee.

"I have applied for a seat in a prestigious college in the city for BBA course. By paying a certain amount of fee, we have already blocked the seat. However, the college asked us to apply online in UUCMS portal and pay the remaining fee through online only. But the government has not yet opened the portal," Ritesh (name changed), another student said.

NEP-SEP confusion

Apart from this, the State government has decided to withdraw the National Education Policy (NEP-2020). Instead, a commission has been constituted for a separate State Education Policy (SEP), which has already submitted an interim report to the government and recommended to introduce three-year degree courses instead of four-year degree honours.

But no official order has been issued from the government in this regard, nor has the government given any oral instructions about this to the universities. So educational institutions are distributing applications for 4-year degree courses under NEP, leading to more confusion.

"We have not received any instruction from the government on whether to enroll students under NEP or SEP. At present, the distribution of applications is happening for four-year courses under NEP as per the previous model. We will proceed according to the decision taken by the government in this regard in the future," said Jayakara S.M., Vice-Chancellor, Bangalore University.

Meeting on May 8

According to sources in the Department of Higher Education, the State government has not taken a clear decision regarding NEP and SEP in the context of the election code of conduct. The second phase of voting will end on May 7. A meeting chaired by the Higher Education Minister will be held on May 8, sources said adding that it is likely to be decided to reintroduce three-year degree courses instead of four-year honours as per the interim report of the SEP Commission.

Jagadeesha G., Commissioner of Department of Collegiate Education, was not reachable.

Space science road map formulation meeting held in city

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

According to ISRO, six distinct space science themes were deliberated during the meeting

A Space Science Road map Formulation (SSRF) meeting was held in Bengaluru recently.

It drew over 200 scientists from various research centres and universities nationwide.

According to ISRO, six distinct space science themes were deliberated during the meeting which include astronomy and astrophysics and exoplanets, cosmology and gravitation, astrobiology, astrochemistry and space biology, heliophysics and space weather, solar system exploration and near-Earth space exploration.

ISRO Chairman S. Somnath contextualised the meeting's objectives and outlined the anticipated outcomes, which aimed to formulate the nation's space science road map with inputs from eminent scientists.

Experts from research institutes across the country delivered plenary talks on open scientific issues and global trends within the six themes.

Subsequently, splinter groups engaged in focused discussions with domain experts to identify significant scientific problems for exploration in the near (2030), mid (2031-2035), and long (2035-2045) terms.

ISRO said that the response to this initiative was highly positive and suggestions were made for splinter group members to identify scientific overlaps and enhance the capacity dedicated to the space science program to ensure its sustainability.

A.S. Kiran Kumar, Chairperson of the APEX Science Board (ASB) of ISRO, and URSC Director M. Sankaran emphasised the importance of involving youth in these programmes and prioritising national goals as a community, ultimately positioning India at the forefront of space science research and exploration.

PhD student found dead

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 27-year-old PhD student was found dead under mysterious circumstances at the Bangalore University hostel on Wednesday.

The deceased has been identified as Ranganath Nayak, a native of Chickballapur, who was living in the hostel. According to the police, he was unwell for a few days and went to the hostel room to rest after breakfast yesterday. The incident came to light when his roommates tried to wake him up, but the room was locked. They forced open the door before alerting the management and found him dead.

The Jnanabharathi police conducted a spot inspection. There were no visible injury marks on the body and a post-mortem report will ascertain the cause of death, a police officer said.

Those in distress may contact Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health suicide prevention helpline 011-40769002.

Special drive to resolve pending traffic violations across State

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A man riding a two-wheeler without wearing a helmet in Bengaluru on Thursday. SUDHAKAR JAIN

With Bengaluru having the highest number of traffic violations across Karnataka, the Commissioner of Traffic and Road Safety is set to launch a drive to address the issue to instill traffic discipline and road sense among motorists.

According to Additional Director General of Police and Commissioner, Traffic and Road Safety, Alok Kumar, the State has witnessed an increase in the number of violations with 3.25 crore violations and ₹1,700 crore fine amount pending till March 31. Fine amount of ₹1,425 crore is pending in the Bengaluru city alone.

"An analysis into this issue revealed that the majority of the violators are two-wheeler riders who are not even aware of the pending violations. This is because the notices would not have reached them as the owners of the vehicle have changed and are not reflected on the registration certificate. Even though the notices were served from the traffic department, it does not reach the actual bike user," Mr. Alok Kumar said.

Due to this, the violation cases pile up, he said, adding that violators with maximum violations of over ₹50,000 fine amount constituted around 27,000 such cases.

Another category are habitual offenders who are aware of the pending violations and continue to ply on road.

A committee comprising the Transport Department, police, and Legal Department officials held a meeting and decided to steps to resolve the pending cases issue.

Discounted schemes

The initiative of discounted schemes launched last year in a phased manner has also not yielded the desired results. According to Mr. Kumar, in the first phase of the 50% discount fine amount, Bengaluru recovered a total of ₹138 crore, but the second and third phases fetched only ₹17 and 12 crore. Though commissionerates like Hubballi-Dharwad, Bengaluru City, and Mangaluru fared well in terms of recovering pending cases, the others failed to achieved similar results due to many reasons.

To tackle the issue effectively, a meeting convened by the committee recently decided to crack the whip and impound the vehicles, and issue court notices to the violators having a maximum number of offences pending against them. The Transport Department officials have been asked to work on the modalities of vehicle seizure and legal action.

The drive is likely to start after May 15 across the State in a phased manner. The violators will be issued notice to give them a chance to clear their dues, followed by which their vehicles will be impounded, and their names and details will be published in public before producing them in the court for further procedure.

Meanwhile, senior police officers in the city said that right now, their focus is only on traffic management, but they will switch over to enforcement part to clear the pending cases and dues. The State police have launched a website (https://t.co/f0wjyib8BI) to facilitate payment of the pending fine amount for the State, except Bengaluru.

Timings
BENGALURU

FRIDAY, MAY. 03			
RISE	05:58	SET	18:35
RISE	02:06	SET	14:05
SATURDAY, MAY. 04			
RISE	05:58	SET	18:35
RISE	02:50	SET	15:02
SUNDAY, MAY. 05			
RISE	05:57	SET	18:35
RISE	03:33	SET	15:58

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	38	28
Mysuru	38	25
Bengaluru	38	25

Bengaluru Today
38°C Morning will be pleasant Day will be slight hot and uneasy. Night also will be comfortable. A dry weather to prevail.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
38°C The weather will be dry. Day will be slight hot with uneasy afternoon. Night will comfortable

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THE HINDU
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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The homes destroyed in Gaza, expected to be rebuilt by 2040

3.7 in lakh. If the Israel-Hamas conflict ends, reconstruction of these homes might last until 2040, according to a United Nations report. The Health Ministry reports an additional 28 deaths from the fighting on Thursday. AP

The aid pledged to Lebanon by the European Union

1.06 in $ billion. The aid is expected to strengthen border control to halt the flow of asylum seekers and migrants from the small, crisis-ridden country across the Mediterranean Sea to Cyprus and Italy. AP

The Myanmar refugees deported amid border tensions

38 Following the 2021 military coup in Myanmar, India has completed its first phase of deportation. Manipur is set to deport 77 people. Thousands of civilians and troops from Myanmar crossed the border to India after ethnic clashes. REUTERS

The forest land in the Garhwal division affected by fires

350 in hectares. The Chief Conservator of Forests in Garhwal, Naresh Kumar said that there had been more than 300 such incidents in the region. 37 people, all underage, have been apprehended for setting fire to the forests. PTI

Highest single-day migrant arrivals in the U.K. in 2024

711 The illegal migrants arrived in small boats, raising the overall number of crossings this year to 8,278. The highest-ever figure in single-day arrivals was 1,295, recorded on August 22, 2022. AFP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Why are Indian spices facing the heat?

Why have countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong and the U.S. announced an investigation into possible contamination of spice mixes sold by MDH and Everest? How has the Spices Board of India responded? What has the U.S. FDA said?

EXPLAINER

Saptaparno Ghosh
Saumya Kalia

The story so far:

At least five countries – including Singapore, Hong Kong and the U.S. – have announced an investigation into possible contamination of spice mixes sold by Indian brands, MDH and Everest. The complaints cite the presence of ethylene oxide (EtO), a toxic chemical used as a food stabiliser, beyond permissible limits. The Spices Board of India in response has initiated mandatory testing of products shipped abroad and is reportedly working with exporters to identify the root cause of contamination.

Which countries have flagged safety of Indian spices?

The domino first shook on April 5, when Hong Kong's Centre for Food Safety suspended the sale of three MDH spice blends (Madras curry powder, Sambhar masala and Curry powder masala) and Everest Fish curry masala. The spice mixes had high levels of ethylene oxide, the regulator said, and advised consumers against purchasing these products. Days later, Singapore ordered a recall of the Everest spice mix, stating that it is unfit for human consumption.

MDH has called allegations over EtO contamination "baseless and unsubstantiated". "We reassure our buyers and consumers that we do not use ethylene oxide at any stage of storing, processing, or packing our spices," the company said in a statement. It added that neither the Spices Board nor the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) have received communication or test reports from Singapore or Hong Kong authorities.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which had previously rejected food and spice imports from India, told *Reuters* that it is "aware of the reports and is gathering additional information about the situation". Regulatory bodies in Maldives, New Zealand, Bangladesh and Australia have announced similar plans.

What are the health concerns?

MDH and Everest's spice mixes allegedly contain high levels of EtO, a prohibited pesticide. EtO is a colourless, flammable gas that was originally intended for sterilising medical devices. It is used as a chemical in industrial settings, agriculture, and as a sterilising agent in food products, including spices, dried vegetables and other commodities. The chemical lends life to the spice industry – it reduces microbial contamination, and in turn, extends products' shelf life.

However, this process is not always airtight. The improper and excessive use of EtO may leave behind residues, causing toxic and even carcinogenic compounds to form, thus contaminating the product. One such compound is ethylene glycol, an ingredient which was found in Indian-made cough syrups that were linked to the deaths of more than 300 children in Cameroon, Gambia, Indonesia and Uzbekistan. Long-term exposure to ethylene oxide is associated with cancers including lymphoma and leukaemia, some evidence shows.

Is there a history of rejections in U.S.?

A scrutiny of FDA's import refusal report, for the calendar year 2023, cites at least 30 instances wherein entry was refused because the products appeared to contain salmonella. These are agents known to cause salmonellosis – a common bacterial food-borne illness. Other than this, there have been at least 11 counts of products being rejected because of misbranding, adulteration, artificial colouring or incorrect labelling. The two causes have existed in combination as well. The report tabulates Ramdev Food Products to have had the maximum rejections in 2023 (about 30), followed by MDH (about 19), MTR (7), Everest (5), makers of Catch: DS Group (2) and Badshah (1).

In fact, in September 2019, a recall of MDH's Sambhar Masala was initiated in the U.S. after FDA discovered the product was contaminated with salmonella. The recall terminated in December 2021. Another such recall involved Everest's Garam Masala and Sambhar Masala, and Maggi's Masala-ae-Magic in June last year.

The U.S. Dept of Agriculture had in February 2022 stated that India and Mexico were the top sources of pathogen-based food import refusals. Their study, from 2002-19, held Indian imports had the maximum number of pathogen-related violations. With 5,115 refusals – the figure represented 22.9% of overall import refusals for pathogen/toxin related violations.

How has India responded?

On April 25, the Spice Board in India announced a slew of corrective measures including initiating mandatory testing of consignments shipped to Singapore and Hong Kong and gathering technical details and analytical reports from the relevant food and drug agencies. It also sought to propose corrective measures to the concerned exporters and initiate inspections to ensure adherence to relevant standards. A circular dated April 30 contains guidelines to exporters on preventing EtO contamination. The guidelines prescribe norms for testing at raw and final stages, storage of EtO treated products and use of alternate methods curtailing the use of the chemical compounds. The Spices Board issued a similar advisory in September 2021, after the EU observed EtO contamination in certain Indian exports. Furthermore, the FSSAI has directed state regulators to collect samples of major spice brands, including MDH and Everest, to test for EtO.

Activists have called for stringent safety checks of curry powders and spices to detect and control the use of EtO in food products and ensure proper implementation of regulatory norms. A recent CUTS report also recommended updating food safety standards to align with global practices, and improving information flow to food industries so that they better comply with regulations.

Is food safety in India lacking?

Simi T.B., who works with CUTS International, a global advocacy group for consumer welfare told *The Hindu*, notwithstanding stringent food laws in place, that the recent controversies "collectively underscore the persistent nature of food safety challenges across various sectors of the food industry".

One challenge is operational – India's diverse food landscape, the lack of standardised record-keeping and intentional food fraud may prevent manufacturers from tracing ingredients and assessing potential risks which compromise the safety of the entire food supply chain. Traceability is particularly challenging for small and medium sized businesses with limited resources.

Some are logistic barriers. At least 10 States/Union Territories lack government or private notified food testing labs, as mandated under the Food Safety and Standards Act 2006. These labs are distributed unevenly across regions; have insufficient number of food safety officers; and were found to operate ineffectively due to resource constraints, showed the FSSAI Annual Report of 2021-22. FSSAI's operations often lack transparency, which "hinders efforts to meet safety standards", build accountability and trust, adds Ms. Simi.

What next?

Delhi-based think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) in a recent note held, "With nearly $700 million worth of exports to critical markets at stake, and potential losses soaring to over half of India's total spice exports due to cascading regulatory actions in many countries, the integrity and future of India's spice trade hang in delicate balance." According to the think tank, the issue demands urgent attention to uphold the reputation of the entire ecosystem.

Vijoo Krishnan, General Secretary of the All-India Kisan Sabha explained that the chain of events could put other small companies or co-operatives' exports under a cloud of suspicion. Importantly, Mr Krishnan explained that in the event of potential losses, farmers of such crops too could find themselves at the receiving end. "We have instances where companies have not paid appropriate prices to farmers even when they were making profits," he stated, adding, "Should the companies make losses now, it could be used as a pretext to reduce prices, thus, burdening the farmer."

GTRI also assessed that if regulators in China follow their peers in Hong Kong, and ASEAN based on that by Singapore, Indian exports could see a "dramatic downturn". This could affect exports valued at $2.17 billion – about 51.1% of the country's global spice exports. The paradigm could further worsen if the EU, which it states, "regularly rejects Indian spice consignments over quality issues", follows suit. The impact could be an additional $2.5 billion, bringing potential losses to 58.8% of India's global exports.

Indian spices and herbs rejected by the U.S. FDA in 2023

A scrutiny of FDA's import refusal report, for the calendar year 2023, cites at least 30 instances wherein entry was refused because the products appeared to contain salmonella

Company	Products rejected	Reasons for rejection
Ramdev Food Products Pvt Ltd	Cumin	Appears to contain salmonella, a poisonous and deleterious substance which may render it injurious to health
	Mixed spices and seasoning	Salmonella
	Coriander	Salmonella
	Nutmeg	Salmonella
	Cumin	Salmonella
	Ginger	Salmonella
	Fennel	Artificial colouring, misbranding
Mahashian Di Hatti (MDH)	Paprika	Filthy, putrid, or decomposed substances otherwise unfit for food; and salmonella
	Mixed spices and seasoning	Salmonella
	Mixed spices and seasoning	Misbranding + salmonella
	Capsicums (cayenne chili, hot peppers) spice	Salmonella
	Spices and seasoning, ground, cracked with salt	Salmonella
Everest	Capsicums (cayenne chili, hot peppers) spice	Salmonella
	Spices and seasoning, ground, cracked with salt	Labelling violation of FPLA because of its placement, form and/or contents statement
	Black pepper	Salmonella
MTR Foods Private Limited	Curry powder, ground, cracked without salt	Salmonella
	Spices and seasoning, ground, cracked with salt	Salmonella
	Spices and seasoning, ground, cracked with salt	Labelling violation
Dharampal Satyapal Ltd. (DS Group Catch)	Mixed spices and seasoning	Appears to be misbranded in that the label or labeling fails to bear the required nutrition information; appears to contain a poisonous or deleterious substance which would ordinarily render the article injurious to health
Patanjali Ayurved Ltd.	Natural extract or flavour	Appears to be a new drug within the meaning of Section 201(p) without an approved New Drug Application (NDA)
Nestle India	Spices and seasoning, ground, cracked with salt	Salmonella
Badshah Masala Pvt. Ltd.	Spices and Seasoning, ground, cracked with salt	Labelling violation
Tulsi Foods	Black pepper	Filthy and salmonella
Speciality Indian Food Parks & Exports	Black pepper	Filthy and salmonella

U.S. FDA's Import Refusal Report

ISTOCKPHOTO

THE GIST

- On April 5, Hong Kong's Centre for Food Safety suspended the sale of three MDH spice blends (Madras curry powder, Sambhar masala and Curry powder masala) and Everest Fish curry masala.
- MDH and Everest's spice mixes allegedly contain high levels of EtO, a prohibited pesticide. EtO is a colourless, flammable gas that was originally intended for sterilising medical devices.
- GTRI assessed that if regulators in China follow their peers in Hong Kong, Indian exports could see a "dramatic downturn". This could affect exports valued at $2.17 billion — about 51.1% of the country's global spice exports.

A farmer protesting against the notification for the acquisition of land by KIADB for Phase II of the Haraluru Industrial Area Development Project in Devanahalli taluk. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

460 days and counting: Persistent protests to save farmland

Though farmers of 13 villages in Devanahalli taluk, abutting Bengaluru, have been protesting for over two years against proposed acquisition of their land for an industrial project, no politician visited the protest site until elections. Shreyas H.S. spoke to the farmers about what they want from political leaders

It is a simmering summer afternoon in April. A group of farmers are sitting under a temporary shelter at Channarayapatna in Devanahalli taluk, on the outskirts of Bengaluru. Rain or shine, this group from 13 villages has been on an indefinite *dharna* (protest) to safeguard their agricultural land, which is set for acquisition for an industrial project. The farmers are resisting the acquisition. The dharna commenced on April 4, 2022, and has now completed 460 days.

The Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) is set to acquire 1,777 acres for the Haralur Industrial Area Development Project (Phase II). In Phase 1, the board developed an industrial area spread over 1,282 acres, where two companies have set up production units. The preliminary notification for the acquisition was issued on August 30, 2021. The final notification is yet to be issued.

The villages where land has been notified for acquisition are Palya, Haraluru, Polanahalli, Gokare Bacchenahalli, Nallur, Mallepura, Nallappanahalli, Cheemachanahalli, Mattabaralu, Muddenahalli, Channarayapatna, S. Tellohalli and Hyadala.

About 700 farmers' families will be affected by this project. Up to 475 acres are owned by farmers belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Agriculture has created employment for about 6,000 labourers in the area.

Though farmers have been protesting for over two years, the issue came back into prominence when they decided to boycott the Lok Sabha elections on April 26 in 14 constituencies in south Karnataka. Several politicians, including Ministers and candidates, tried to meet the farmers to cajole them to cast their votes. Following promises of resolving the problem, the farmers eventually cast their votes but have continued their protest. They plan to continue until their demand is met.

For Ramesh Cheemachanahalli, sitting at the *dharna* site, the protest is now a routine part of his life that otherwise revolves around agriculture.

Like him, every day, at least 35 farmers sit at Channarayapatna under a tent. On certain days, more than 500 gather at the site. For instance, when Rakesh Tikait of the Bharatiya Kisan Union visited them on September 6, 2023, more than 1,000 farmers turned up at the protest site.

"Our family has been living in Cheemachanahalli for several generations. For us, land is an emotional issue. The KIADB has notified 7 acres of land of our family for acquisition. We grow grapes, ragi, *avarekai* (beans) and manage fodder for cattle. Parting with the land simply means the end of cultivation. For nearly 1,292.1 acres, landowners have filed an objection against acquisition pointing out that the land is part of a thick agriculture belt that yields food and horticultural crops, and is used for dairy farming," said Ramesh. "I have been eating food grown on our land, and the family considers the land as our mother. For people here, losing land is no less than losing their mother," he said. The notified land includes irrigated land, apart from rain-fed land.

> The farmers have to pay a hefty commission after receiving compensation. For instance, if the compensation is ₹1 crore, the farmer has to pay nearly ₹30 lakh as commission to the agent.
> **A FARMER**

A meeting to protest against the notification for the acquisition of land by KIADB. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

(Above and left) The land notified for acquisition by KIADB.

"During elections, politicians speak of working for the interests of farmers. After the polls, they disregard their promises. We are not anti-development. The government can acquire barren land elsewhere for the project," he added.

Pramod, another farmer, said that although farmers have been protesting for more than 400 days, politicians visited them only during elections, fearing a boycott.

Among other people, the farmers have met Minister for Commerce and Industries, and Infrastructure Development M.B. Patil. Pramod said following the boycott call, Congress candidate in Chikkaballapur constituency M.S. Raksha Ramaiah and Minister for Food and Civil Supplies K.H. Muniyappa arrived at the protest site and promised to resolve the farmers' issues after the elections.

Karalli Srinivas, who will lose land, asked why KIADB wants to set up industries on fertile land, which is a source of income for farmers. "Most of us here are small farmers, dependent on the land for livelihood. We want to continue farming; KIADB should drop the project. Our sit-in protest will not stop until the government relents," Srinivas said.

Farmers conduct survey

Besides the *dharna*, farmers have conducted a survey of 1,292.1 acres of land, for which objections were filed with KIADB. The survey revealed that about 42% of the land was granted by the government to landless people and cultivators, while 58% is ancestral property. The data showed that 50% of the land is rain-fed, 33% is irrigated through borewells, and 17% is categorised as 'others'. Farmers are cultivating crops in both rain-fed and irrigated land. Ragi is grown in 49% of the total area; 7% of the land area has grapes and pomegranate cultivation; 23% has mango, tamarind, and cashew plantations; while vegetables and flowers are cultivated in 12% of the total area, the survey revealed.

According to this survey, about 1,000 tonnes of ragi and other foodgrains, 2,000 tonnes of grapes, 150 tonnes of mangoes, and other produce are grown on this land. Up to 8,000 litres of milk are produced every day in 13 villages, and dairy farming is a major source of income for farmers.

Meetings yield no results

Following objections to the acquisition, Patil met the farmers. In the first meeting, he sought time to examine the files to understand the problem, saying he had recently taken charge as Minister. In the second meeting, there was no promise of withdrawing the notification, as a small section of farmers expressed willingness to give land for the project. Ramesh Cheemachanahalli claims that real estate agents and middlemen persuaded a few landowners to give up their land for the project. The meeting ended in an impasse. The KIADB is likely to call a third meeting after the Lok Sabha elections.

Mahesh M., Chief Executive Officer, KIADB, said that confusion among farmers has stalled the project. Otherwise, the final notification for acquisition would have been issued by this time. "This is the extension of the Devanahalli Industrial Area. The KIADB has completed the first phase, and industries are being set up. This is the ideal place for setting up industries," he said. After the Lok Sabha elections, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will hold another round of deliberations with farmers to decide the fate of the project.

He expressed confidence that farmers may eventually agree to part with their land. An official in the KIADB claimed that most of the land is not actually cultivated, and farmers are not sharing the complete story. "There is a lot of barren land that is not irrigated and is dependent on rain. In these patches, people are not growing crops. Agriculture is not a major economic activity for them. They have other sources of income since these villages are close to Bengaluru city," he said.

Role of realtors

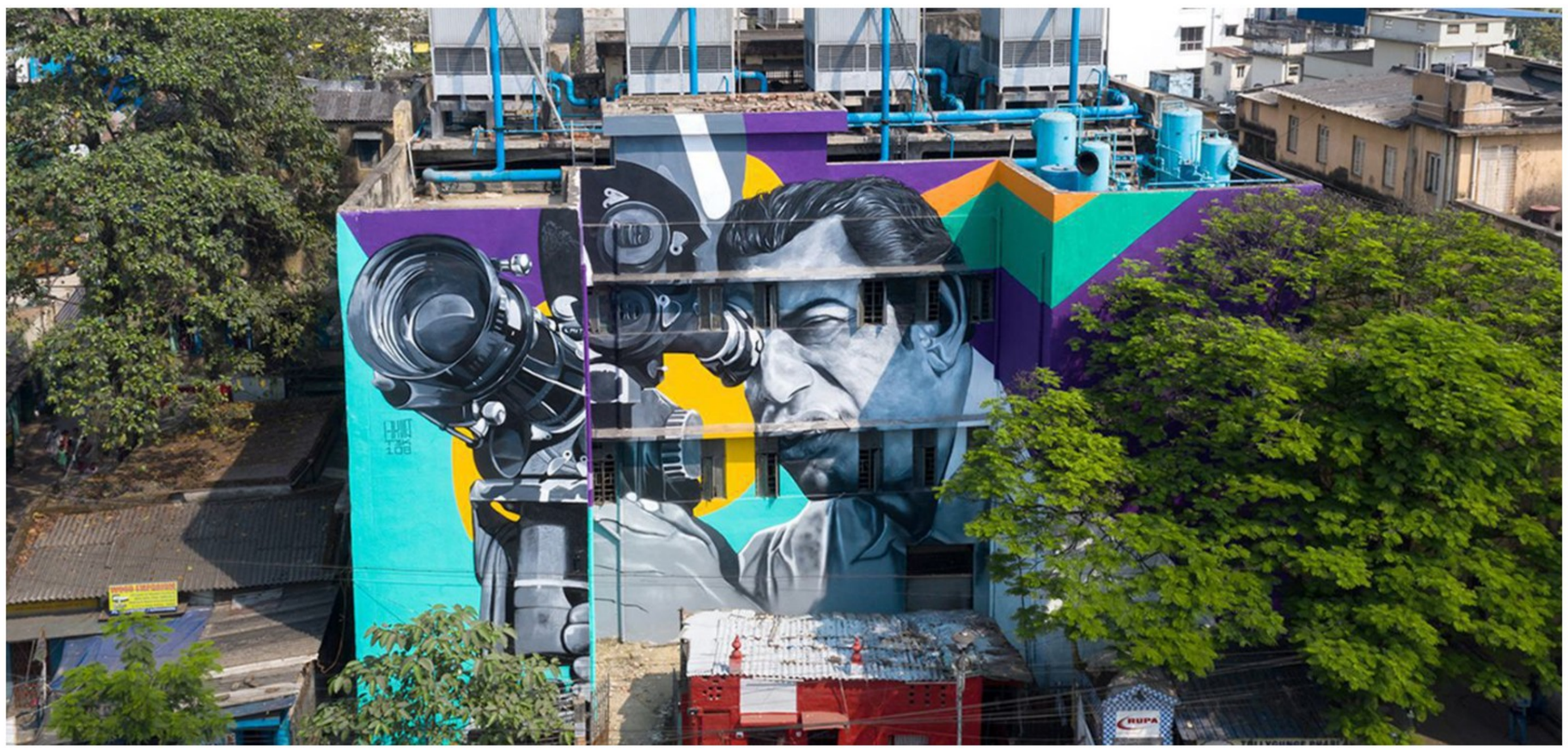
The farmers allege that a few real estate agents are pushing for the project. Some such agents have even entered into sale deed agreements by paying an advance to the farmers, they allege. After the land is acquired, a portion of compensation money will be paid to clear the remaining payment. These agents are also manufacturing dissent among the farmers, and KIADB is aiding this, they feel. Some agents act as middlemen between farmers and the KIADB. For compensation, the farmers have to furnish more than 20 documents. Many farmers do not have the knowledge to secure them from various departments. These agents have contacts in government departments and speedily procure the documents.

"The farmers have to pay a hefty commission after receiving compensation. For instance, if the compensation is ₹1 crore, the farmer has to pay nearly ₹30 lakh as commission to the agent. The earnings of farmers are drained by the blood-sucking agents," claimed a farmer, who did not want to be identified.

Now, these agents are pursuing the KIADB not to drop the project, and it appears that the officials are yielding, said another farmer. "The KIADB should look at the plight of small landholding farmers whose lives are dependent on agriculture," said a farmer.

A KIADB official insisted that the board has no history of entertaining real estate agents and middlemen. The compensation is directly given to the landowner, and the board follows a fair process, he said. "Farmers should not listen to people who claim to be middlemen. After the polls end, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will listen to land-owners who are opposing the project and take the final call. The KIADB has offered compensation either in terms of cash or in terms of land to those who will lose theirs. The board will always work according to the law, and the process is very fair," claimed Mahesh.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



The movies and documentaries that Satyajit Ray couldn't film

Ray was always assessing the cinematic potential of literary sources that ignited his imagination. Some of his unfinished projects are well known — The Alien, A Passage to India and the Mahabharata. But there were many more which only Ray aficionados are aware of

Amitabha Bhattacharya

May 2 was Satyajit Ray's 103rd birth anniversary. In this article, dated June 15, 2021, Amitabha Bhattacharya talks about the ideas and scripts of the legendary auteur which did not make it to the screen.

Satyajit Ray is universally admired for his cinematic creations. However, to understand his mind, it may be worthwhile to reflect on the literary ideas that he could not transform on celluloid. Some are well known – The Alien, A Passage to India and the Mahabharata. But there were many more which only the Ray aficionados are aware of. Fortunately, the essays and letters of Ray and his son Sandip; the biographies by Marie Seton (*Portrait of A Director* , 1971) and Andrew Robinson (*Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye*, 1989); Suresh Jindal's *My Adventures with Satyajit Ray – The Making of Shatranj Ke Khilari* (2017), Nasreen Munni Kabir's *Conversations with Waheeda Rehman* (2014); and articles by Bangladeshi photojournalist Amanul Haque and others throw some light on the subject.

An idea about aliens

Based on his own story and ideas, and encouraged by the famous author Arthur C. Clarke, Ray drafted the screenplay of his sci-fi film The Alien in 1967. Columbia Pictures agreed to produce it with Peter Sellers in an Indian role. Steve McQueen was contacted and even Robert Redford considered, and the Indian cast was almost finalised. Columbia even advanced some money for the project. However, there were many unexpected twists and turns, as recounted by Ray in "Ordeals of the Alien" (*The Statesman*, October 4 and 5, 1980), and the project had to be abandoned. Ray wrote to Sellers:

"Dear Peter, if you wanted a bigger part
Why, you should have told me so right at the start.
By declining at this juncture
You have simply punctured
The Alien balloon,
Which I daresay would be grounded soon, Causing a great deal of dismay
To Satyajit Ray."

The project was revived later, but by then Steven Spielberg's *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* was released (1982), with 'striking parallels' noticed by Clarke and others. Ray held, as Robinson quotes, that E.T. "would not have been possible without my script of The Alien being available throughout America in mimeographed copies". However, Spielberg commented, "Tell Satyajit I was a kid in high school when his script was circulating in Hollywood'. Despite advice, Ray did not pursue the matter further. His depiction, as communicated to Jindal, that the aliens were "benign by nature, small and acceptable to children, possessed of certain supernatural powers, not physical strength but other kinds of powers, particular types of vision, and that they take interest in earthly things" was indeed influential.

The West's image of India

Ray met E.M. Forster at Cambridge in 1966 with the intention to film A Passage to India . Robinson quotes Ray, "... but he knew my name. He kept shaking his head much of the time which meant that he didn't want the book to be filmed. That was the drone – no! – in words, gestures, looks, everything. He was adamant. And I felt there was no point in asking why." Later, much after Forster's death, Ray was approached in 1980 by the trustees at King's College, but by then he had lost interest in the subject. David Lean's version (1984), understandably, could not satisfy Ray – "... The whole thing is too picturesque... For me none of the characters come alive... Peggy Ashcroft's performance notwithstanding..." In a famous essay "Under Western Eyes" (*Sight & Sound*, Autumn 1982), Ray had touched upon the limitations of the West's interest in India and how its views were often distorted and unreal, sometimes even with "grotesque stereotypes as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh..." He ended, "Slighted for so long, India will not yield up her secrets to the West so easily..." It is a pity that A Passage... could not be filmed by Ray.

All on paper

The Mahabharata fascinated Ray from his early childhood. From the late fifties he had been planning to film it. But in what language? "How to introduce even the main characters to a non-Indian audience?" At one time, he intended to cast Dilip Kumar, Toshiro Mifune and others. Ray was interested in the dice game part. More than the war, it was the exploration of personal relationships between the characters that appealed to him cinematically. In jest, he once told Jindal, "I gave up, because I couldn't imagine Kirk Douglas playing Arjuna."

Waheeda Rehman, who acted in Ray's *Abhijan* (1962), said that Ray had been keen to adapt R.K. Narayan's *The Guide* and had contacted her for the female lead. As she observed, the approach and treatment of the film would have been entirely different under Ray's direction. But then we would have missed the Bollywood blockbuster.

There were many Bengali film ideas that Ray had nurtured at some point or the other, as detailed by Sandip Ray in *Ananya Satyajit* (1998) and others. Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's *Rajasimha* (with Balraj Sahni) and *Devi Chaudhurani* (with Suchitra Sen), Saratchandra Chattopadhyay's *Mahesh*, Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay's *Drabamayeer Kashibash* and *Ichhamati*, Manik Bandyopadhyay's *Padma Nadir Majhi*, Mahasweta Devi's *Bichhan*, Buddhadeva Bose's *Ekti Jiban* , Prafulla Roy's *Ram Charitra*, Shibram Chakraborty's *Debotar Jonmo*, Banaphool's *Kichhukshan*, Bangladeshi writer Shahed Ali's *Jibrailer Dana* and Selina Hossain's *Hangor Nodi Grenade* were thought of. For a variety of reasons, including non-availability of actors (Chunibala Devi and Suchitra Sen, for example), these ideas had to be abandoned at different stages. According to Sandip, his father moved on with his work, never regretting what could not be pursued.

Ray was approached by Indira Gandhi to make a documentary on Jawaharlal Nehru for whom he had admiration. Besides, in a letter of June 1, 1978, Ray wrote to Jindal about the proposals he had been requested to consider "... (a) documentary on Rajasthani music for French TV... (b) a 3-part film for BBC (each 90 minutes long) on any subject or subjects of my choice... (c) a proposal from UNO to make a film on 'the horrors & miseries of war', for worldwide TV screening... (d) a revival of The Alien under a major U.S. company backing with an updated script and a new title..." UNICEF approached him for a film on child labour. Ray was also interested in the operatic form of *Balmiki-Pratibha*, and documentaries on notables like Radhanath Sikdar who first calculated the world's highest mountain peak. None of these eventually took off for reasons not publicly known.

Conscious of what's happening all around, Ray was immersed in ideas. A storyteller, both in celluloid and print, he was always assessing the cinematic potential of literary sources that ignited his imagination. Now, on the occasion of Ray's 100th birth anniversary celebrations, it is for the researchers to probe and delve into the available material in order to fathom why many of these ideas couldn't get transported to the medium of cinema.

Amitabha Bhattacharya is a retired IAS officer who has also worked with the UNDP. Views are personal

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

"Wake, waken, awake, awaken (D. Ashok, Madras)."

"Those are simple words, but are not easy to distinguish. Fowler's "Modern English Usage" revised by Cowers deals with the distinction between the forms thus: "Distinction between the forms is difficult, but with regard to modern usage certain points may be made: (1) Wake is the ordinary working verb (You will wake the baby; Something woke me up; I should like to be waked at 7.30; Wake the echoes) for which the others are substituted to add dignity or formality, or to suit metre, or as in (3) or (5) below. (2) Wake alone has (and that chiefly in waking) the sense be or remain awake (Sleeping or waking; In our waking hours). (3) Awake and awaken are usually preferred to the others in figurative senses (When they awoke, or were awakened, to their danger; This at once awakened suspicion; The national spirit awoke, or was awakened; A rude awakening). (4) Waken and awaken tend to be restricted to the transitive sense; when he wakens is rarer for when he wakes than that will waken him for that will wake him. (5) In the passive, awaken and waken are often preferred to awake and wake, perhaps owing to uncertainty about the p.p. forms of the latter part; it wakened me is rare for it woke or waked me, but I was wakened by it is common for I was waked or woke or woken by it; see also the alternative forms in (3) above. (6) Up is very commonly appended to wake, rarely to waken, and never to awake and awaken."

In American English, the past and past participle of 'wake' are 'woke' or 'waked' respectively. 'Woken' is used only in British English. Again in American English, the past and past participle of 'awake' are 'awoke' or 'awaked' respectively. 'Awoken' is used only in British English. 'Awake', 'waken' and 'awaken' as verbs are generally used in literary writing."

"Social, sociable (Amrit Kaur, Chandigarh)."

" 'Social' means 'pertaining to society.' Social service, social problems, social disorganisation, social evil. There was a time when it meant friendly, companionable. Even now some use it in this sense. But the word that is used these days to convey the sense of 'friendly' is 'sociable.'

She is a very sociable person.

A social club is a club where you spend some time with others. Not all of them may be sociable! 'Unsociable' means 'not disposed to seek the company of others, not companionable, reserved'.

He is an unsociable person.

The opposite of 'sociable' is 'unsociable.'"

"Selenology (S. K. Banerjee, Calcutta)."

" 'Selenology' means the scientific study of the moon. In Greek, 'selene' means 'the moon.' The first 'e' is pronounced like the 'ee' in 'feel,' the second 'e' like the 'i' in 'fill,' the first 'o' as in 'hot' and the second 'o' like the 'a' in India.' The stress is on the third syllable."

Published in The Hindu on November 12, 1991.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

On May 3, 1715, a total solar eclipse occurred over Europe. A quiz on the event

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

The English astronomer X is famous for, among other things, predicting the onset of the eclipse with an accuracy of four minutes. As a result, the event is also known as "X's eclipse". Name X.

QUESTION 2

At the time the eclipse occurred, the date was April 22 and not May 3 (the year was 1715 in either case). The reason for this is that Great Britain would adopt the _____ _____ only 37 years later. Fill in the blanks.

QUESTION 3

Before the eclipse occurred, the English cartographer John Senex had published maps of the eclipse's path created by both X (in Q1) and Y in March. Y is famous for pushing the parliament of Great Britain to pass the Longitude Act in 1714. It promised rewards for anyone who devised a simple method to estimate a ship's longitude while at sea. Name Y.

QUESTION 4

While X (in Q1) had predicted the eclipse to within four minutes, he'd got the path of the eclipse wrong by around 30 km. X later realised he'd used the wrong lunar _____ (a table that describes the path of the moon). Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 5

In 1686, X (in Q1) coined the name '_____' to refer to a period of about 6,585.3 days, which could be used to predict the occurrence of solar and lunar eclipses. X said he was inspired by a term in an 11th century Byzantine book. Fill in the blank.

Visual question:
Name the man whose bust is depicted here. X (in Q1) succeeded to his title in 1720, and his work helped Y (in Q3) prepare the eclipse map. PUBLIC DOMAIN

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. This British football legend was the runner up for the Ballon D'Or in 1999. **Ans: David Beckham**
2. The party to which Tony Blair belonged to. **Ans: Labour party. He was the U.K. Prime Minister for three terms**
3. Identify this novel that won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1932. **Ans: *The Good Earth* by Pearl. S. Buck**
4. This movie based on a popular comic book saga was released in 2008. **Ans: *Iron Man***
5. This song by Pink Floyd was banned in South Africa. **Ans: 'Another Brick in Wall (Part II)'**
Visual: The reason why May 2 is celebrated as International Harry Potter day. **Ans: It is the day the battle of Hogwarts was fought and Lord Voldemort was defeated**
Early Birds: Vasumann Yadav| Neha Vaddiparti| ViswanadhaRao Batchu| M. Suresh Kumar

Word of the day

Acquisitive:
eager to acquire and possess things especially material possessions or ideas

Synonym: to get

Usage: *She has an acquisitive mind.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/acquisitivepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /əkwɪzɪtɪv/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

The prolonged wait for big-star Kannada movies has left fans worried. Filmmakers share reasons why...

Delayed, not denied

Vivek MV
vivek.mv@thehindu.co.in

Kannada film buffs and theatre owners in Karnataka have often complained about the lack of frequent releases of big-star movies. The industry is currently awaiting Upendra's *UI,* Dhruva Sarja's *Martin,* and Duniya Vijay's *Bheema*. The delay has been longer than usual, say frustrated fans. However, is it fair to demand more than one movie from each star in a year?

"It's not an easy task to achieve," opines Lahari Velu, director of Lahari Recording Company, co-producer of *UI*. "We are producing something extraordinary, and that takes time," he adds.

Launched in June 2022, *UI* has been in production for close to two years now. Upendra, back to direction after *Uppi 2* in 2015, released a teaser without visuals on September 18, 2023. The gimmicky move was typical of his quirky ways to generate buzz around his movies. He followed it up with *Troll Song,* and while the promotional content has worked to an extent, the makers haven't been able to lock a release date.

"The movie is VFX-heavy, and it requires extensive work. People won't come to theatres if you give them just good content. They need something more. We promise world-class quality with *UI,*" says Lahari.

"Witness the madness," reads the teaser of *Martin,* released in February, 2023. The visuals show a bulked-up Dhruva Sarja in the middle of high-octane stunt sequences. The film has been in production for more than two-and-a-half years, leaving fans and industry insiders puzzled. When, exactly, will they witness the madness?

Recently, the film's director A P Arjun posted on X that reports his rift with producer Uday K Mehta were false. "All my films so far were wrapped up in 120 days whereas we have shot the stunt sequences of *Martin* in those many days. Hence, you can imagine the scale of the movie," says Arjun, adding the film's high-end CG work is causing the delay.

Wait for updates

The most anticipated announcement from the Kannada film industry took place on December 8, 2023, when Yash said he would be starring in Geetu Mohandas' big-budget film, *Toxic*. It took the *KGF* star more than one and a half years to reveal his next. The wait was agonising for fans, with the hashtag 'Yash 19' trending on social media multiple times. When *Toxic* hits the screens on April 10, 2025, it will end Yash's three-year absence on the big screen.

Sudeep is also busy wrapping up an actioner, titled *Max,* directed by debutant Vijay Karthikeya. Fans expressed disappointment when he was seen competing in celebrity cricket leagues when they needed him to be more involved in films. Sudeep put out a post on his X account in February. "Updates will come when the team has something concrete to announce. *Max* is shaping up well and it's our top priority to give the best results," he wrote.

Tease me, please me (From left) Promotional posters of *Toxic, Martin* and *UI* (below). SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ground realities

Veteran producer Jayanna of the Jayanna-Bhogendra duo explains how the budgets of star films have changed drastically. The producer duo bankrolled two blockbusters – *Gajakesari* and *Mr and Mrs Ramachari* – in 2014. "We produced six hits with Yash in just two-and-a-half years. We made *Gajakesari* with ₹7 crore and *Mr and Mrs Ramachari* for ₹8 crore. These films did great at the box-office. But today, the remuneration of stars and technicians has gone up due to the pan-India wave," he says.

Filmmakers are struggling to seal pre-release deals, forcing them to delay the theatrical release of their projects. "Earlier, a film team earned maximum revenue from theatres. Today, the success percentage at theatres has taken a huge beating. Filmmakers depend on OTT and television rights. However, the streaming platforms are hesitant to buy Kannada projects due to less number of people subscribing and watching Kannada content online," Jayanna says.

Not virtual waste

TS Krishnan will be launching his book, *Untapped Knowledge in India's E-Waste* this weekend. The book explains the economic, cultural, and political factors that shape India's e-waste recycling industry. *On May 4, 5pm at Atta Galatta. Call 9632510126.*

ಅರ್ಜುನ
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MAKE THE NUTRICHOICE

A constant 'star' in Geetha's campaigns

Actor Shivarajkumar has been campaigning for his wife, Geetha, Congress candidate for the Shivamogga LS seat.

He accompanies his wife on her visits to villages and addresses small gatherings. Often, people request him for a song or dance. However, he has said he will hold a dance programme after the polls.

Recently, his statement that his father, Kannada matinee idol Dr. Rajkumar, was interested in politics, attracted criticism from his brother-in-law, Kumar Bangarappa, a BJP leader.

During Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's visit to Shivamogga on Thursday, Mr. Shivarajkumar accompanied party leaders on the dais.

When he was asked to address the gathering, the actor said he was a fan of Mr. Gandhi's humanity and physical fitness.

Actor Shivarajkumar at an election campaign for his wife, Geetha, in Shivamogga.

KSE stopped from holding election meeting

The former Deputy Chief Minister K.S. Eshwarappa, contesting as an Independent candidate for the Shivamogga Lok Sabha seat, was stopped from holding an election meeting on the premises of a temple at Shiralakoppa in Shikaripur taluk on Wednesday.

Supporters of the candidate had organised a meeting on the premises of Mylara Lingeshwara temple on Sorab Road in Shikaripur.

The team meant to enforce the model code of conduct ensured that the stage and sound system were removed.

Mr. Eshwarappa got angry as he reached the spot. He addressed the gathering from the vehicle.

He alleged the programme was disturbed at the behest of the former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa and Congress leaders.

> The State government should fully waive farmers' loans. If not, we will take to the streets to fight against the government.
>
> **B.S. YEDIYURAPPA,** BJP leader and former CM

Madhu Bangarappa's failed translation

Minister Madhu Bangarappa had an embarrassing situation when he struggled to translate Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's speech at a rally in Shivamogga on Thursday. Mr. Gandhi had to repeat his sentences to help him. Finally, Mr. Bangarappa handed over the responsibility to MLC Naseer Ahmed.

> BJP and JD(S) leaders, who speak volumes about respect for women, should visit the victims in Prajwal Revanna case and give them confidence.
>
> **D.K. SHIVAKUMAR,** Deputy Chief Minister

Apologise to the nation for canvassing for a 'mass rapist', Rahul tells Modi

Congress leader goes hammer and tongs at the BJP for supporting Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna

SHARP ATTACK

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA/RAICHUR

Calling Janata Dal (Secular) leader and Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, a "mass rapist", Congress leader Rahul Gandhi demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi apologise to the nation for campaigning for such a candidate.

Mr. Prajwal Revanna is the NDA candidate from the same constituency in the Lok Sabha elections.

Speaking in Raichur and Shivamogga at election rallies on Thursday, Mr. Gandhi came down heavily on the BJP national leadership for "supporting Prajwal Revanna".

Speaking in Shivamogga, he said: "Prajwal Revanna's case is not just a sex scandal. It is a case of mass rape." He claimed that Mr. Modi knew about his case when he campaigned for the accused in the Lok Sabha elections.

"The Prime Minister should apologise to the nation for campaigning for him," Mr. Gandhi demanded.

Early alert

In Raichur, he displayed a copy of the letter said to have been written by a local BJP leader in Hassan, Devaraje Gowda, to top leaders of the party about the alleged sexual crimes of Mr. Prajwal Revanna and questioned why Mr. Modi shared the dais with the accused "despite knowing the facts".

Mr. Gandhi said: "Mr. Prajwal Revanna had sexually assaulted around 400 women and video-recorded the offence. Even after he was notified about the sexual crimes of Mr. Prajwal Revanna, the [Union] Home Minister did not say anything. After that, the Prime Minister shared dais with Mr. Prajwal Revanna and sought votes for him... I would like to ask the mothers and sisters of this country as to why Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought votes for this man even after knowing his sexual crimes." Mr. Gandhi also blamed the Prime Minister and [Union] Home Minister for allowing the accused to escape from India despite knowing his sexual crimes.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi speaking at a public meeting in Raichur on Thursday. SANTOSH SAGAR

"The Prime Minister has all agencies such as CBI, Customs Department, and Immigration Department under him and he could have got him [Mr. Prajwal Revanna] within a second. But he did not arrest him but let him run away from the country. Now, the Prime Minister is afraid of coming to Karnataka. He has cancelled all his meetings. But women of Karnataka know that you had protected Mr. Prajwal Revanna because you wanted power and his alliance," Mr. Gandhi charged.

On the Constitution

At the Shivamogga rally, he alleged that BJP president J.P. Nadda had attacked the Indian Constitution by calling those who advocate for equality as "naxals" in an interview.

"The Indian Constitution, for which B.R. Ambedkar's contribution was significant, clearly stressed the need for equality. However, the BJP president has thrown away the Constitution with his statement," he said.

"This is the first election in which the BJP has clearly stated that they want to change the Constitution. But the Congress has been trying to protect it," he said, showing a copy of the Constitution that he carried.

Referring to the Prime Minister's statement that he would protect the Constitution, Mr. Gandhi wanted to know if he had such an intention and why the party's president was attacking the statute.

"If the Dalits, other backward classes, and Adivasis demand equality, you call them naxals. There cannot be a bigger attack on Indian Constitution than his [BJP president's] statement," he said.

Nearly a third of the 766 districts in the country is yet to eradicate manual scavenging practices. The BJP-led Union government had set a deadline of August 2023 to declare India manual scavenging-free, according to the Guarantee Check report. FILE PHOTO

Oppressed sections further marginalised, reveals report

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Bahutva Karnataka and Ambedkar Reading Circle (ARC) have jointly released a 'Guarantee Check report' that analyses the track record of the BJP-led Union government on its promises of social justice to marginalised communities in the last 10 years.

According to the report, there has been a 48% rise in cases registered under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act during the BJP's rule despite its 2014 election manifesto promising highest priority to ensuring the security of marginalised people.

In 2022 alone, there were 67,646 cases, amounting to 188 cases per day, the report pointed out. While there has been a 49.87% increase in the incidents of rape against Dalit women from 2015 to 2019, the report, citing an NCDHR report, noted that only a marginal allocation of ₹168 crore was made for their access to justice.

Manual scavenging continues

Highlighting the plight of manual scavengers, the report showed that nearly a third of the 766 districts in the country is yet to eradicate manual scavenging practices.

The BJP manifesto of 2014 had emphasised its commitment to eliminate manual scavenging and the government had set a deadline of August 2023 to declare India manual scavenging-free.

"We have developed Chandrayaan, but we still have no technology to address this issue and remove the human element from this inhuman practice," Prashant Bhaware from the ARC said during the launch of the report.

Between 2018 and November 2023, 443 individuals died while doing manual scavenging as per government records. However, organisations such as the Safari Karamchari Andolan pin the figure much higher at 1,760 deaths.

Monetary compensation

He noted that the government was addressing the issue only through building toilets and no attention was being given to improving awareness or addressing the caste aspect of the the problem. Pointing out that rehabilitation of manual scavengers was a major part of the problem, he highlighted how only 2% of the manual scavengers identified by the government have received the promised monetary compensation.

"The government is ignorant and dodging the responsibility of rehabilitating vulnerable castes who are forced into this," he said.

On caste census

Speakers during the launch also pointed out the government's reluctance to support the caste census despite ensuring proper representation and opportunities for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and backward classes in the 2019 manifesto. The failure to recruit to positions reserved for marginalised communities was also highlighted.

Activist Vinay Sreenivasa, speaking at the launch, noted that lakhs of acres of forest land had been diverted, resulting in the eviction of adivasi communities under the BJP regime. He also termed the Ekalavya model and NEP an "assault on the adivasi culture and tradition".

Old scars of illegal mining are overlaid with fresh political tussles to gain control of Ballari

Sharath S. Srivatsa
BALLARI

In the hard-fought battlefield of Ballari – a region that once hit international headlines because of the mining scam that left its land ravaged – a sympathy card is being played to mute the effects of the Congress government's guarantee schemes.

The Ballari Lok Sabha constituency (reserved for ST) is witnessing a tough fight between the former Minister and Naik community leader B. Sriramulu of the BJP and four-time legislator from Sandur E. Tukaram of the Congress.

A shock defeat

Mr. Sriramulu tasted a shock defeat in the 2023 Assembly election from Ballari Rural. He is attempting to resurrect his political career now. However, his campaign strategy of seeking sympathy votes by asking electors "not to let him down" is being termed "defensive". On the other hand, Mr. Tukaram, who started his career in a mining company owned by the powerful Lad family, is seen as having a clean image and being approachable. Both are from the Valmiki community that has a large presence in the constituency.

"Guarantees have come at the time when drought has driven farmers to despair. It has added income to families. Our groundnut and maize crops failed and mining work stopped long back. Several men in the village have migrated looking for a livelihood," admitted Durgesh, a BJP worker at Banavina Kallu, near Kudligi. According to him, Mr. Sriramulu, who has been in Ballari politics for nearly two decades now, is inaccessible while Mr. Tukaram remains humble and easily accessible.

Kottur resident Jagadish Hiremath, an employee of a seed company and a farmer himself, said farmers are not showing interest in the election as they are under severe stress. He said a large number of farmers, who lost the crops, are yet to pay for seeds and fertilizers that they took for cultivation.

"The credit for seeds and fertilizers will be rolled over to the next season but farmers have to repay with interest. They also have to repay loans taken under microfinance. Besides, they need money to start agricultural activity this year." At Shishula Nagar thanda in Sandur, Durga Naik, who migrates eight months a year, is waiting to go back to work on sugarcane fields in Bagalkot, Mysuru, and Mandya. "There is no work here. Mining dust has destroyed agricultural fields. The Forest Department has termed us as encroachers whereas mining is allowed. There is no one to look after our welfare," he said.

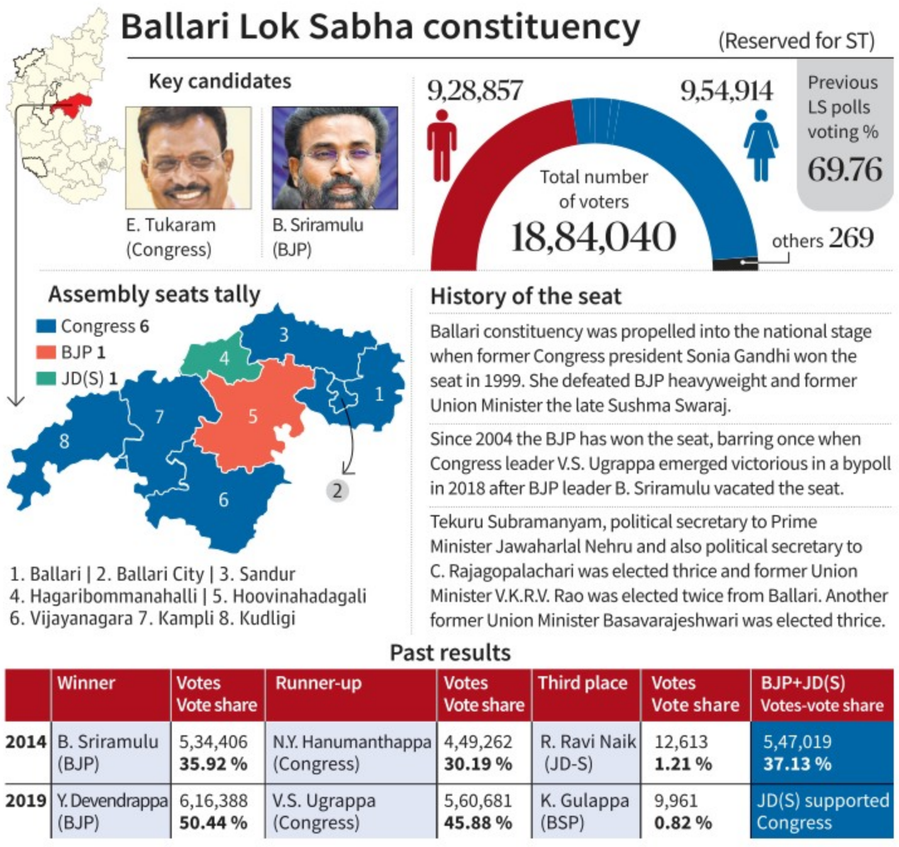
A big grouse against Mr. Sriramulu has been the inaccessibility factor and "inefficiency" of those in his inner circle. However, the BJP is hoping for a good show in Ballari this time as the turnout for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally at Hosapete last week has kindled hopes. In a district where livelihood issues across a spectrum of communities are majorly intertwined with mining, Mr. Modi touching upon Hindutva instead of development is being discussed.

Re-entry of Reddy

The re-entry of the former Minister G. Janardhana Reddy into the BJP, who has a slew of cases against him over alleged illegal mining, is expected to help Mr. Sriramulu only marginally.

The performance of the Congress, which has five MLAs in the Ballari Lok Sabha constituency, in this election depends on coordination. There are murmurs about the friction between district in-charge Minister B. Nagendra and Minister Santosh Lad with whom Mr. Tukaram is identified. The outcome in the constituency depends on the way the Valmiki and Veerashaiva and Lingayats, who are seen as "influencers" in villages, vote besides the Scheduled Caste and Kuruba votes.

In early 2000, Ballari shot into prominence for its iron ore, fuelled by the demand abroad, and illegal mining ravaged Sandur, Hosapete, and Ballari taluks. The scars of the illegal mining are yet to be healed, but it is not part of the election narrative.


Ballari Lok Sabha constituency
(Reserved for ST)
Key candidates
E. Tukaram (Congress)
B. Sriramulu (BJP)
9,28,857
9,54,914
Total number of voters
18,84,040
others 269
Previous LS polls voting %
69.76
Assembly seats tally
Congress 6
BJP 1
JD(S) 1
1. Ballari | 2. Ballari City | 3. Sandur
4. Hagaribommanahalli | 5. Hoovinahadagali
6. Vijayanagara 7. Kampli 8. Kudligi
History of the seat
Ballari constituency was propelled into the national stage when former Congress president Sonia Gandhi won the seat in 1999. She defeated BJP heavyweight and former Union Minister the late Sushma Swaraj.
Since 2004 the BJP has won the seat, barring once when Congress leader V.S. Ugrappa emerged victorious in a bypoll in 2018 after BJP leader B. Sriramulu vacated the seat.
Tekuru Subramanyam, political secretary to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and also political secretary to C. Rajagopalachari was elected thrice and former Union Minister V.K.R.V. Rao was elected twice from Ballari. Another former Union Minister Basavarajeshwari was elected thrice.

Past results

	Winner	Votes Vote share	Runner-up	Votes Vote share	Third place	Votes Vote share	BJP+JD(S) Votes-vote share
2014	B. Sriramulu (BJP)	5,34,406 **35.92 %**	N.Y. Hanumanthappa (Congress)	4,49,262 **30.19 %**	R. Ravi Naik (JD-S)	12,613 **1.21 %**	5,47,019 **37.13 %**
2019	Y. Devendrappa (BJP)	6,16,388 **50.44 %**	V.S. Ugrappa (Congress)	5,60,681 **45.88 %**	K. Gulappa (BSP)	9,961 **0.82 %**	JD(S) supported Congress

Polls to six Legislative Council seats on June 3

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Election Commission on Thursday announced the schedule of the biennial election to six seats (three each from graduates' and teachers' constituencies) of the Karnataka Legislative Council. The polling will be held on June 3 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. and counting of votes will be taken up on June 6.

The election has been necessitated as six MLCs are scheduled to retire on June 21. The election notification will be issued on May 9 and May 16 is the last date for filing nominations. The scrutiny of nominations will be done on May 17 and the last date for withdrawal of candidature is May 20.

With the announcement of the election, the model code of conduct has come into force with immediate effect in Karnataka North-east Graduates', Karnataka South-west Graduates', Bengaluru Graduates', Karnataka South-east Teachers', Karnataka South-west Teachers', and Karnataka South Teachers' constituencies, stated a press release issued by the Election Commission.

The seats that will fall vacant are of Chandrashekar B. Patil, Ayanur Manjunath (vacant since April 19, 2023), A. Deve Gowda, Y.A. Narayanswamy, S.L. Bhoje Gowda, and Marithibbe Gowda.

Why and how Muslims were given quotas under OBC reservation in Karnataka

One of the first commissions to recommend reservation for Muslims in the State after Independence was the R. Nagana Gowda Commission which submitted its report in 1961

EXPLAINER

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

Post Independence too Muslims continued to be part of the reservation matrix in Karnataka as they were categorised as a backward class.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing a poll rally in Rajasthan's Tonk-Sawai Madhopur Lok Sabha constituency on April 23, accused the Congress of "snatching the reservation of SCs, STs and OBCs and providing it to Muslims through the backdoor", tying it up with his charge that "Congress would redistribute the wealth of people to Muslims'".

He claimed that Congress had already done so in Karnataka and said it was "against the spirit of the Constitution" as it did not allow reservation on religious grounds.

Mr. Modi who repeated the claim at multiple poll rallies since then even said that he would not allow Congress to bring in "religion-based reservation to Muslims till I am alive" at a poll rally in Hyderabad on Monday.

On the same day Mr. Modi made this charge for the first time, Hansraj Gangaram Ahir, Chairman, National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), a BJP leader and a former Minister of State in the Narendra Modi cabinet, issued a press note and said he would seek clarification from the Chief Secretary of Karnataka about the 4% reservation given to Muslims in the state.

In the press note he referred to the 17 and 19 Muslim castes included in category 1 and 2A respectively of the backward classes reservation matrix in Karnataka as "various castes within the Muslim community that have been historically underprivileged and victimised" .

However, with regards to the 4% reservation provided to Muslims under Category 2B of the OBC reservation matrix in the state, he said that "religion based reservation affects and works against the ethics of social justice". He argued that "socially and educationally backward castes/communities cannot be treated on par with an entire religion" and said this led to the observation that "the rights of actual OBCs are being taken away".

Is Muslim Reservation new in Karnataka?

Calling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's charge a "blatant lie" and NCBC's press note a "politically motivated lie", Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that his government had not introduced any new reservation for Muslims as it was being made out to be, but the fact remained that "Backward Classes (BC) reservation of Muslims has been in existence since 1977 (04.03.1977) and it has withstood legal scrutiny". "Successive Backward Class Commissions, namely, Havanur, Venkataswamy, Chinnappa Reddy, and Prof. Ravi Verma Kumar Commissions have recognised Muslims subject to income ceiling as Backward Class," he further clarified.

Minorities in the OBC reservation matrix of Karnataka

Category	Degree of backwardness	Quantum of reservation	Number of castes
Category I	Most Backward	4%	95, including 17 Muslim castes
Category II (A)	Relatively More Backward	15%	102, including 19 Muslim castes, Sikhs, and Buddhists
Category II (B)	More Backward	4%	Muslims
Category III (A)	Backward	4%	3
Category III (B)	Relatively Backward	5%	6, including Christians and Jains (Digambara)
Total		32%	208

Reservation for Muslims in Karnataka dates back to 1874

The princely state of Mysore has been a pioneer in introducing reservation to achieve fair representation and social justice. The first ever order for affirmative action was issued in 1874 and it included Muslims.

The first ever census conducted in India in 1872 revealed a preponderance of Brahmins in public services, to correct which the first order introducing reservation was introduced in 1874 in Mysore state, restricting it to only the Police Department. A roster of posts was created and of every 10 posts, the first two were reserved for Brahmins, while the remaining eight were reserved for "Muhammadens and other Hindus".

This is considered to be the first ever order of reservation in India and it included Muslims, as a community that needed representation.

When this measure was deemed woefully insufficient and demands rose for better representation, the king of Mysore formed the Miller's Commission in 1918, which gave its report in 1921. Miller's Commission also classified "Muhammadens" as a "Backward Class" and the community was given reservation.

Reservation for Muslims post independence a contentious issue

Post-independence too, Muslims continued to be part of the reservation matrix in Karnataka as they were categorised as a backward class. It has also been time and again challenged in the courts on the grounds that Muslims cannot be given reservation, as reservation in the Constitution is limited to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (both Hindus). However, the courts have upheld providing reservation for Muslims under the Backward Classes quota in several cases pertaining to Karnataka itself and many states have this provision.

One of the first commissions to recommend a reservation for Muslims in the state after independence was the R. Nagana Gowda Commission which submitted its report in 1961. It categorised Muslims as a backward class and brought over 10 castes among them in the most backward category. It was implemented in 1962, but was challenged in the court. After the issue was put in the backburner for over a decade, again L. G. Havanur Commission formed by D. Devaraj Urs-led Congress government recommended inclusion of Muslims under the OBC list and it was implemented through an order in 1977. This was also challenged in the High Court. But a division bench upheld the government order, which was again challenged in the Supreme Court.

In 1983, the apex court ordered the formation of a new Backward Classes Commission to take a fresh look, which led to the formation of Venkataswamy Commission in 1984. Its report, which again recommended Muslims to be included in the OBC list, was rejected by the then Ramakrishna Hegde led Janata Party government as it recommended exclusion of Vokkaligas and some sects of Lingayats, making it a political hot potato.

To resolve this impasse, yet another Commission was formed led by O. Chinnappa Reddy, who again recommended inclusion of Muslims in the OBC reservation matrix, based on which the Congress government led by M. Veerappa Moily fixed 6% reservation for Muslims, Buddhists and Dalit converted Christians in Category 2 in 1994. However, a Supreme Court judgement in the Mandal Commission case capped reservation at 50%, following which the state government led by H. D. Devegowda of Janata Dal created Category 2B for only Muslims and fixed the quantum of reservation at 4%, which stays to this day.

How are Muslims categorised in the OBC reservation matrix of Karnataka?

The OBC reservation matrix in Karnataka is categorised as: Category I (Most Backward), Category II (A) (Relatively More Backward), Category II (B) (More Backward), Category III (A) (Backward) and Category III (B) (Relatively Backward). Based on surveys and studies by the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes of the socio-economic and representation parameters of various communities they are assigned to these categories.

Presently, 17 Muslim castes in the state like Kasai, Kasab, Nadaf and Pinjaras, have been determined to be "Most Backward" and assigned to Category 1 which includes 95 castes and has 4% reservation in the state. Likewise 19 other Muslim castes like Ataris, Luhars and others have been determined to be "Relatively More Backward" and assigned to Category II (A) which has a total of 102 castes and has 15% reservation in the state. Apart from these 36 castes among Muslims, the rest of the community have been determined to be "More Backward" and assigned to Category II (B) which has only Muslims and has 4% reservation in the state.

Muslims in all three categories have been determined to be "backward" to varying degrees by surveys and studies of various backward classes commissions and included in the reservation list, and Category II (B) for Muslims is not based on religious grounds, as alleged by Hansraj Gangaram Ahir and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, ruling Congress in the state and multiple past presidents of backwards classes commissions have argued. In support of their argument they point out that the reservation matrix in Karnataka, a pioneer in affirmative action, includes all communities of the state, but five - Brahmins, Arya Vaishyas, a section of Jains, Nagarthas and Modaliars - in it. Not just Muslims, other religious minorities like Christians, Buddhists, Digambara Jains and Sikhs also enjoy reservation benefits under the OBC category, they argue.

BJP's aborted attempt to remove Category II (B) for Muslims

In March 2023, just over a month ahead of the assembly polls in the state last year, Basavaraj Bommai government pressed hard to accommodate reservation related demands of Panchamasali subsect among Lingayats.

The government announced that it had scrapped Category II (B) which gave 4% reservation to Muslims, moving them to Economically Weaker Section (EWS) quota of 10% meant for the poor in forward communities that do not enjoy reservation benefits and dividing up the 4% in II (B) to Vokkaligas and Veerashaiva Lingayats, hiking their reservation by 2% each.

However, this was challenged in the Supreme Court arguing there was no basis on which the Muslims who have been considered "backward" since 1921 Miller's Commission Report were clubbed under the forward castes. On April 26, 2023, the BJP-led state government gave an undertaking before the apex court that the order making changes to the OBC reservation matrix will be kept on hold. This was after the Supreme Court had earlier made observations that the move was on a "highly shaky ground" and "flawed".

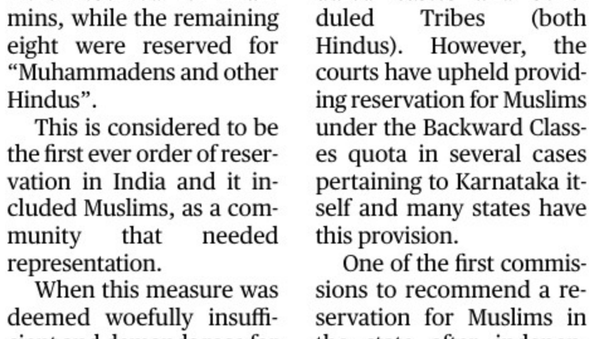
Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, responding to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's charges that the Congress government has given Muslims reservation based on religion once it came to power, has hit back saying the status quo stands as per the affidavit given by the BJP government in the Supreme Court in April 2023 and the government has made no changes to it later.

Percolation wells, a logical solution to Bengaluru's water riddle

Percolation wells are designed to capture rainwater so that the groundwater table is restored, conserved and recharged

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

A model of percolation well displayed at Lalbagh.



A completed percolation well at Lalbagh.

United Way of Bengaluru (UWBe), a unit of the global United Way network, a privately-funded non-profit organisation founded 132 years ago, is pitching in to find a logical solution to Bengaluru's water woes.

UWBe has embarked on an ambitious project to build 10,000 percolation wells across the City by 2026. Percolation wells are designed to capture rainwater so that the ground water table is restored, conserved and recharged as the created percolation and filtration environment triggers natural aquifers.

Rajesh Krishnan, CEO, UWBe told *The Hindu* that, ''We have kicked off our percolation well project for Bengaluru by building 500 percolation wells in Lal Bagh Botanical Garden.''

Private funding

The non-profit organisation with the help of private funding has already completed the construction of 3,600 across the city in the last two years, he said.

According to Krishnan, the effect of these percolation wells in Lal Bagh has already been evident as most borewells in the garden, including the dried ones come alive, get recharged and refilled. In addition, when digging an open well recently near the Mavelli Gate, the Lal Bagh authority could find water just within 30 feet.

However, someone who builds a percolation well needs not always be the direct beneficiary of it as depending on aquifers (a body of rock or sediments that hold groundwater) his or her neighbour could be the primary beneficiary of a percolation well.

Watershed analysis

Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board has recently roped in UWBe to construct 300 percolation wells. BWSSB has close to 12,000 borewells and only half of them are active, while over 2,000 of them have dried up and 3,700 are yielding very little water. Also, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, which currently has 16,000 borewells across the City, has engaged the NGO to augment nearly half of these borewells are dry through percolation wells.

Although BBMP has no land parcels available for making percolation wells, it did a zone and watershed analysis of 1300 of its parks in the City. UWBe is given the water conservation mandate for BBMP parks in Bommnahalli and Yelahanka Zones. BBMP currently has a budget for percolation and the NGP played an influencing role by mooting something like that.

Emphasising the importance of percolation wells, Krishnan said even in the best monsoon scenario, the City's water situation may not improve much as it would not be able to hold more than 10% of rainwater. According to IISc, Bengaluru can't hold more than 10% of its rainwater because its unplanned development, unbridled growth and concretisation drastically brought down the water-holding ability of soil. So even if the City gets reasonably good rains, its water runs off, forms a cesspool, or gets evaporated, he explained.

''Monsoon after monsoon this is what we are seeing."

"Yet, mostly everyone including civic bodies and politicians, are on a reactive mode, hoping the current water crisis will fade away once the monsoon comes, but that's far from reality,'' he added.

Scientifically built

Krishnan further said, corporates, governments or individuals should not keep the environment as a flavour of the season, instead they should have a long-term focus on the environment, rainwater harvesting and water management. Nothing helps other than scientifically built percolation wells.

Percolation wells are 12 feet deep and 4 feet wide earthen dams padded with concrete rings inside and filled with gravel so that rainwater gets trapped into it and percolates down to natural aquifers. Rain falls into the percolation well, water leaks into the soil in multiple layers and it goes down to the ground and natural aquifers get activated, instead of allowing rainwater runs off or forms a cesspool and evaporate.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 3, 1974

MLAs' Plea for Dispersal of Industries

Bangalore, May 2: A plea was made in the Karnataka Assembly to-day by members for the dispersal of industries, giving due prominence industrialisation of district headquarters and for encouragement of small industries in backward areas. Participating in the debate on the demands under Industry and other heads amounting to Rs. 28.76 crores, the members referred to complex problems that would arise if the industries were packed in Bangalore and surrounding areas. The need for toning up State-owned industries to make them profitable and greater encouragement to the handloom industry by creating a separate directorate was also underlined by some members. The discussion was inconclusive.

Minister Warns Doctors

Bangalore, May 2: Doctors who do not report for duty at the places to which they are posted within 15 days of the posting would be placed under suspension immediately, the Health Minister, Mr. H. Siddaveerappa, told the Karnataka Assembly to-day.

He said instructions had been issued accordingly to the Director of Health Services. The Minister, who was replying to the demands relating to his Department, appealed to the members not to interfere in transfers and promotions if they wanted the state of affairs in the Department to be improved.

Karnataka InFocus

THE HINDU

NUGGETS OF HISTORY

How the sanctuary came to be

Bhadra Wildlife Reserve was formally declared a sanctuary on September 6, 1974, making it the 25th tiger reserve in India. Karnataka has five tiger reserves: Bandipur, Bhadra, Nagarahole, Dandeli-Anshi and Biligiriranga Tiger Reserve.
The sanctuary is unique considering its landscape.

Bringing together forests

The sanctuary was formed by bringing together 15 State forests and two minor forests. The area consists of moist mixed deciduous forest and dry mixed deciduous forest. Shola forest is found around Bababudangiri State forest. The area is full of bamboo plantations. Besides, there are around 120 tree species that include teak, rosewood, mathi, honne and nandi.

Many species of animals

The sanctuary has, according to the Forest Department, an estimated 42 species of mammals, 264 species of birds, 43 species of reptiles, 18 species of amphibians, and 56 species of butterflies. tigers, leopards, wild dogs, elephants, gaur, sambar, spotted deer, wild boar, giant squirrel, and peacocks are found here. River Tern birds visit the place for breeding.

Undulating terrain and hills

The area consists of undulating terrain with valleys and steep hillocks. The altitude varies from 650m to 1,875m above sea level (MSL). Mullayyanagiri (1,914 m), which is close to the northern boundary of Muthodi State Forest in the sanctuary, is the highest peak in Karnataka. Bababudangiri (1,700m) is another hill of the sanctuary.

Average rainfall in Bhadra division

The average rainfall in the Bhadra Wildlife Division is between 1,500 mm and 1,700 mm. Muthodi and Hebbe ranges of the sanctuary receive higher rainfall than Lakkavalli and Tanigebyle ranges. Gangegiri receives maximum rainfall. Aldhara receives a low rainfall of 1,000 mm. Bhadrava river and its tributaries are the main sources of water in the sanctuary.

Bhadra Tiger Reserve: A paradise for scientists, tourists, and photographers

Tourists are advised to wear forest-friendly clothing during safari. They are asked to maintain silence so that they can listen to the sounds of nature, and that of animals

Sathish G. T.
LAKKAVALLI (CHIKKAMAGALURU)

The sun is just about to rise as the staff of the Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary office at Lakkavali keep the vehicles ready for the morning safari. One member is busy issuing tickets after taking the fixed fee, while others are instructing the visitors to get into the vehicles meant for safari.

The chorus of the birds, the fragrance of flowers, and the dust rising from the rough lane welcome the guests to the forest. Anticipating sighting of a leopard, if not a tiger, the travellers maintain silence. Eyes are busy scanning every movement in the bushes and the rustle of the leaves.

Suddenly, the driver-cum-guide raises his hand, pointing his fingers to a shrub, and whispers, "Two leopards." Even as all the tourists in the vehicle strain to catch a glimpse, the animals disappear in the greens. "Oh, I missed it," says a man with a high-end camera.

The two-and-a-half-hour journey in the sanctuary is marked by such "misses", and occasionally the animals recognise the visitors and honour their presence. With a few clicks, the lensmen thank the creature for a "good pose." There are days when many visitors return without sighting any wild animals, except for peacocks and spotted deer, which are a dime a dozen.

Since the schools declared holidays after the annual examinations, the number of people visiting the Tiger Reserve for safari has gone up. The tourists are advised to wear forest-friendly clothing during the safari. They are asked to maintain silence so that they can hear, listen to the sounds of nature, and observe birds, animals. The Forest Department does not encourage tourists to pick up anything from the forest floor as a souvenir or play music. The visitors are not allowed to disturb animals.

Deer spotted at Bhadra Tiger Reserve in Chikkamagaluru district. H.S. SHIVAKUMAR

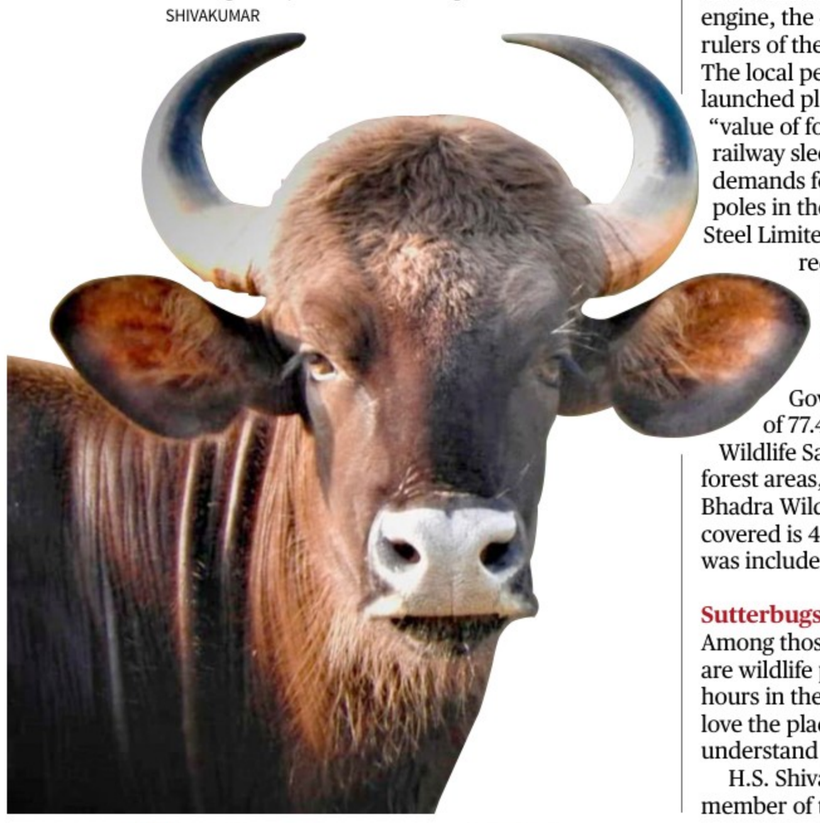
History of the sanctuary

The Bhadra Tiger Reserve has a long history. For centuries it remained undisturbed. The Forest Department has recorded its history with documents available. At the beginning of the 19th century, the Western Ghats were intact, with no gaps. A formal department for the conservation of forests was set up by the Mysuru rulers in 1864. By the end of the 19th century, forest policy took shape.

Later in the 20th century, the systematic reservation of large areas of forest began. With the technological advances, including the steam engine, the dependence on forests increased. The rulers of the day monopolised the timber trade. The local people were kept out. The department launched plantation activities to increase the "value of forests." There was a huge demand for railway sleepers. Besides that, there were demands for laying telephone poles, and electric poles in the forests. The Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Limited, which was started in the 1910s, required fuel wood for its steel production. Similarly, Mysore Paper Mills was also dependent on the forests.

After Independence, the Government of Mysore declared the area of 77.45 square miles as Jagara Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in 1951. Later, by adding new forest areas, the State Government declared Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary in 1974. The total area covered is 492.30 sq kms. In 1999, the sanctuary was included in the Project Tiger area.

Indian gaur captured at Bhadra Tiger Reserve. H.S. SHIVAKUMAR



Sutterbugs' delight

Among those who frequently visit the sanctuary are wildlife photographers. They spend long hours in the forests with cameras. Many of them love the place for its unique landscape and also understand the challenges of the terrain.

H.S. Shivakumar, a wildlife photographer and member of the Hiregowja Gram Panchayat in Chikkamagaluru, has spent many days capturing wildlife in Bhadra Tiger Reserve. He has captured tigers, leopards, elephants, and birds in the forests. "The terrain offers tough challenges for wildlife photographers. There are thick bushes, and it is difficult to spot the animals. Even if we notice movement of animals amidst bush, seldom do we capture them full frame," he says. Shivakumar visits the villages on the boundaries of the sanctuary and captures photos many times.

There are many senior officers in the State government, who have developed wildlife photography as a hobby. Their understanding of nature and commitment to conserving forests have influenced them to take up innovative programmes.

G. Prabhu, an IAS officer, who is right now CEO of Tumakuru Zilla Panchayat, spent countless days in areas of Bhadra Tiger Reserve as part of his duty and as a wildlife photographer. Whenever he got free time when he was CEO of Chikkamagaluru ZP, he visited Muthodi, Lakkavalli, Tanigebylu areas. He had the chance to capture wildlife in the hilly ranges painted with violet and pink flowers - neelakurinji - in 2022.

Neelakurinji season

Neelakurinji, a shrub belonging to the Strobilanthes genus, flowers once every 12 years. Besides that, as an officer, he gave attention to grassland development under National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. "Chikkamagaluru is the land where seven rivers take birth, and they have been sources of water for people in three states. This fact conveys to us how important it is to conserve our forests," he says.

The Jungle Lodges and Resorts, a State Government enterprise, runs River Tern Lodge on a hillock, located on the edge of Bhadra reservoir. The lodge has been named after river tern birds that breed on the rocks in the reservoir during the summer. Thousands of birds descend on the small island to nest. During this period, many tourists go boating and observe the birds.

Bhadra reservoir backwater in the Bhadra Tiger Reserve. Visitors often can go for boating here. SATHISH G.T.

A crocodile in Bhadra reservoir backwaters. H.S. SHIVAKUMAR

Bhadra reservoir backwaters. SATHISH G.T.

"It is interesting to note that, of all the places, the river tern birds choose this place to breed. This shows its significance, and we need to conserve it. The birds visit in large numbers during the summer and go back during the monsoon. Any change in their schedule is an indication of a change in the climate," says Prabhu.

Heat prompts Kerala to close all educational institutions till May 6

Meeting of State Disaster Management Authority, chaired by CM, asks schoolchildren to avoid holiday classes from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m; workplaces with asbestos and tin sheet roofs should be closed during the day; heatwave to continue in the State

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

With temperature staying unusually high in the State, a meeting chaired by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday decided to suspend classes in all educational institutions, including professional colleges, till May 6. The online meeting of the State Disaster Management Authority, which was also attended by Collectors, assessed the possibilities of heatwaves in the State and issued instructions to mitigate the impact of the heat.

The meeting instructed schoolchildren to avoid holiday classes from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Daytime parades and drills should also be avoided at training centres of the Police, Fire Force, other forces, National Cadet Corps, Student Police Cadets etc. With the India Meteorological Department (IMD) continuing to issue a yellow alert for heatwaves for Alappuzha, Palakkad, Thrissur, and Kozhikode districts, Mr. Vijayan urged residents to keep away from direct sunlight between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Those working under the sun like construction workers, farmers, and hawkers should reschedule their work timings. Workplaces roofed with asbestos and tin sheets should be closed during the day. Workers living in these types of roofed houses should be shifted, said Mr. Vijayan.

Scorching heat: A man uses a cardboard box to shield himself from the sun, in Kochi on Thursday. THULASI KAKKAT

'Warm night'

With daytime temperatures remaining unusually high and giving the people a harrowing time, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a 'warm night' forecast along with a heatwave alert for the State. The agency is also considering a 'hot day' alert for the State after temperatures soared to unprecedented levels.

V.K. Mini, Director incharge, IMD, Kerala, says normally warm night is declared when the maximum temperature remains equal to or above 40 degrees Celsius and the minimum temperature departs from the normal by 4.5 to 6.4 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile, one more person died due to sunstroke in the State. Vijeesh, a native of Kozhikode, suffered sunstroke on Saturday, and died at Kozhikode Medical College Hospital on Thursday. Two individuals succumbed to heat stroke in the State earlier.

Cong. alleges conspiracy in Mayor-KSRTC driver tiff

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Congress on Thursday alleged a political conspiracy in the mysterious disappearance of the memory card of a CCTV camera on board the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) bus involved in the tiff between Thiruvananthapuram Mayor Arya Rajendran and the bus driver H.L. Yadhu.

Alleging serious lapses on the part of KSRTC and the police, Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan alleged that the memory card could have been deliberately removed and destroyed, fearing the crucial piece of evidence could weaken the Mayor's case.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday

TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Friday: Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Odisha, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala. Hot and humid weather likely to prevail over coastal Karnataka, Karaikal and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	37.4	28.8	Kozhikode	—	39.0	29.8
Ahmedabad	—	41.4	23.8	Kurnool	—	45.3	31.5
Aizawl	—	32.2	26.9	Lucknow	—	35.7	20.8
Allahabad	—	38.8	22.0	Madurai	—	41.7	28.6
Bengaluru	—	38.2	25.5	Mangaluru	—	34.2	28.0
Bhopal	—	37.8	19.0	Mumbai	—	33.0	25.9
Bhubaneswar	—	39.0	24.2	Mysuru	—	38.3	26.0
Chandigarh	—	35.4	18.0	New Delhi	—	35.5	19.3
Chennai	—	40.0	28.7	Patna	—	38.3	26.2
Coimbatore	—	39.5	26.4	Port Blair	—	34.5	26.4
Dehradun	—	34.9	15.8	Puducherry	—	36.2	29.2
Gangtok	—	24.5	14.3	Pune	—	40.6	22.2
Goa	—	34.2	24.7	Raipur	—	41.4	26.2
Guwahati	—	38.0	22.8	Ranchi	—	37.1	25.4
Hubballi	—	43.0	24.0	Shillong	2	27.6	14.0
Hyderabad	—	42.3	29.2	Shimla	—	25.5	11.8
Imphal	28	20.9	15.7	Srinagar	—	23.2	5.7
Jaipur	—	36.4	22.5	Thiruvananthapuram	—	36.6	28.0
Kochi	—	34.2	29.4	Tiruchi	—	42.7	29.6
Kohima	9	25.8	13.0	Vijayawada	—	41.2	29.6
Kolkata	—	40.0	29.1	Visakhapatnam	—	35.0	29.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	9	—	.35	282	192	
Bengaluru	10	24	.15	132	142	
Chennai	13	9	107	77	70	
Delhi	17	34	.33	287	242	
Hyderabad	45	30	.14	92	128	
Kolkata	20	26	.25	72	90	
Lucknow	6	39	.23	246	144	
Mumbai	34	94	.64	50	113	
Pune	79	90	116	52	50	
Visakhapatnam	13	32	.20	39	103	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Dhanbad, Jharkhand recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 344 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Ariyalur, Tamil Nadu recorded a healthy AQI score of 31

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Railways deletes reference to loco pilots watching cricket

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

The Railway Ministry has deleted the reference made to loco pilots "engrossed in watching a cricket match on their mobile phones" in the Vizianagaram train accident in safety circulars issued later which banned the crew from using Bluetooth headsets, official sources said on Wednesday.

The issue pertains to Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw's statement made in New Delhi on March 3, 2024, that the accident "happened because both the loco pilot and co-pilot were distracted by the cricket match which was going on."

He was referring to the rear-end collision between Train No. 08504 Visakhapatnam-Rayagada Passenger with Train No. 08532 Visakhapatnam-Palasa Passenger between Kantakapalle and Alamanda railway stations in Waltair Division of East Coast Railway in Andhra Pradesh on October 29, 2023, which left 17 people, including the loco pilot and his assistant, dead and 34 injured.

After *The Hindu* published the report "Loco pilots were not watching cricket at time of crash" based on the final inquiry report of the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS) on Saturday, the Minister clarified that the findings of the CRS would be final. There was tentative initial possibility that the loco pilots may have been distracted at the time of the accident, he said.

Soon after Mr. Vaishnaw's statement, the Railways issued circulars banning the crew from using Bluetooth headsets while on duty. In a circular, the Southern Railway expressed shock that the crew members were engrossed in watching a cricket match on their mobile phones, facilitated by the use of Bluetooth devices of headphones. "This blatant disregard for safety protocols is utterly unacceptable and places countless loves at grave risk," it said in a circular.

The spot of the rail accident in A.P.'s Kantakapalli.

In a similar circular the South East Central Railway said, "Disturbingly, it was revealed that the crew members were distracted by watching a cricket match on their mobile phones, facilitated by the use of Bluetooth devices or headphones. This egregious disregard for safety protocols is unacceptable and puts countless lives at risk," the circular said.

But with no evidence forthcoming later in the mobile data usage analysis to substantiate the allegation that the loco pilots were watching cricket and the final investigation report of the Commissioner of Railway Safety not making any mention about the same, the Railways have recalled the safety circulars, the sources said.

The railways have withdrawn the circular and issued a fresh circular after deleting the portions referring to the loco pilots watching cricket.

Driving schools oppose new licence test format

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala government's bid to switch to the revised driving licence test format hit a stumbling block on the first day itself with driving schools across the State boycotting the tests *en masse* on Thursday, forcing the Motor Vehicles department to call off the test proceedings for the day.

Driving schools' associations, including unions affiliated to the Centre of Indian Trade Unions and the Indian National Trade Union Congress, which have been opposing the reforms, boycotted the tests. In Malappuram, members of a union affiliated to the CITU barricaded a ground, preventing entry of vehicles and candidates.

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CHANGE OF NAME

WE, MOHAMMED Sunil Avhad and Kaunain Tehzeeb Valiulla, R/o SC 3 Heritage Homes, Chikka Banasswadi Main Road, Near CMR College, OMBR Layout, Munnireddy Layout, Bengaluru-560043 have changed our minor son name from Armaan Sunil Avhad, whose year of birth is 2011 to Mohammed Armaan Sunil vide affidavit dt: 30.04.2024 sworn before Notary A.R.Muneer Ahmed, B'luru

I BASAVARAJ S/o Siddappa, R/o Gandhi Chowk Rd, Near Saler Oni, Kumbar Area, Shahapur, Yadgir-585223 have changed my name to Basavaraj Kangund vide affidavit dt 02.05.24 before Notary S.Vijayakumar, Bluru.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE

ASIAN PAINTS LIMITED
#6A, Shanthi Nagar, Santacruz (E), Mumbai - 400055,

NOTICE is hereby given that the certificates for the undermentioned securities of **Asian Paints Ltd Company** has been lost and the holder of the said securities / applicant has applied to the company to issue duplicate certificate. Any person who has claim in respect of the said securities should lodge such claim with the company at its registered office **WITHIN 15 DAYS** from this date, else the company will proceed to issue duplicate certificate without further intimation. Name of the holders **K. N. Rao** and **Usha Krishnan** (Joint Holder). Kind of securities-Shares. Face value Rs 1, Number of Securities-1200, Distinctive numbers 14385531 to 14386730, Folio No. - ANK69630,

Name of the holder/applicant
Date: 03-05-2024 **Usha Krishnan**
Place- Hosur

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF 57th ADDL. CITY CIVIL & SESSION JUDGE, MAYO HALL AT BANGALORE (CCH 58)
O.S. NO. 25783/2023
H.g. 29/06/2024

BETWEEN :
M/s. ICICI BANK LIMITED
Mittal Tower, M. G. Road, Bangalore- 560 001
Represented by its Manager and Power of Attorney Holder
Ms. Mansi Singh
D/o Mr. Anil Kumar Singh
Aged 24 years
Fxncol@yahoo.co.in
Phone No. 8041216669

...PLAINTIFF

V/s
Mr. RAMAKANTH REDDY T.
...DEFENDANT

Summons to Defendant

Mr. Ramakanth Reddy T.
S/o. Tarimala Bhaskar Reddy, Aged 46 Years On Demand Agility Software Pvt. Ltd., SCO 43, Old Judicial Complex Civil Lines, Sec-15, Gurgaon Gurgaon- 122 001
Also at:-
No. 25, 2nd Cross, Vignana Nagar, Kuvempu Road, Opp. Fare Choice Super Bazar," Bangalore- 560 075.

Whereas, the above named Plaintiff has filed a Civil Suit for Recovery of a sum of **Rs. 13,81,489.90/- (Rupees Thirteen Lakhs Eighty One Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Nine paisa Ninety Only)** apart from future interest of 24% p.a., in O.S. No. 25783/2023 and same is pending adjudication in CCH 58, Before 57th Addl, City Civil & Sessions Judge. Mayo Hall, Bengaluru.
You are hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble Court on the **29th** day of **June, 2024** at **11:00 A.M.** to answer to the same, if failed the suit will be decided in your absence, Exparte.
Given under my Hand and Seal of the Court this the **19th** day of **April, 2024.**

By the order of the Court
Deputy Registrar
City Civil Court
Mayo Hall
BENGALURU- 560 001

FX & Co.
ADVOCATES
New No. 99, Old No. 11/1
Gover Road, Cox Town,
BENGALURU- 560 005

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE XXIV ADDL. CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE AT BANGALORE (CCH-20)
O.S.No. 25253/2022
Hg. 06/06/2024

BETWEEN
ICICI Bank Limited
having its Registered Office at ICICI Tower, Near Chakli Cirle, Old Padra Road, Vadodara- 390 007
And its branch office at Mythri Center, # 4/10, Hosur Road, Bommanahalli, Bangalore- 560 068 ...Plaintiff
AND
Harish V. & Anr.
...Defendants

SUMMONS TO DEFENDANTS
To,
Mr. Harish V.
Aged about 26 years
S/o. Mr. Venkatesh
R/a. No. E-161,12th "A" Cross, Near Ramamandir Temple, Kamakshipalya, Bengaluru- 550 079
...Defendant No. 1

And:
Mr. Venkatesh Y.
Aged about 53 years
S/o. Yellappa
R/a: No. E-161, 12th "A" Cross, Near Ramamandir Temple, Kamakshipalya, Bengaluru- 550 079
...Defendant No.2

Whereas the Plaintiff has instituted the above proceedings against you seeking recovery of **Rs.10,37,244.42/- (as on 27/10/2021)** along with interest at 24% p.a. and other consequential reliefs. You are hereby summoned to appear before the XXIV Addl. City Civil & Sessions Judge, Mayo Hall Unit, Bangalore [CCH-20] in person or by a pleader duly instructed and able to answer all material questions relating to the above proceedings on the **06/06/2024 at 11:00 A.M.** take notice that in default of your appearance on the day mentioned before, the suit will be heard and determined in your absence.
Given under my hard and the seal of this court, this the 24th day of April, 2024.

Deputy Registrar
City Civil Court,
Mayo Hall Unit
Bangalore

Advocate for Plaintiff
Shiva & Co. Advocates,
No.109, Commerce House, 9/1, Cunningham Road, Bangalore- 560 052

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice hereby given to general public that our client **Nagarathna Rajendran**, has lost the original sale deed document **no. YAN-1-09049-2004-05**, dated 22-07-2004, pertaining to the property & she has lodged a police complaint with Bangalore police vide lost report no. **1016800/2024 dated 16-04-2024** for the lost of above said sale deed.

If any person/s find the same, the public is hereby requested to return the same to the address mentioned below for which my client will be obliged & will be suitably rewarded.

H. A. AMARNATH , Advocate
#272, 2nd Block RT Nagar, Bangalore - 560 032.
Mobile NO: 98865 85809 | 78998 65859 | 98452 71943

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G20
E-Tender Notice No. ECN-06-2024-RT
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tender for the following work:

Name of work	Approx. Value
Shifing/modification of existing 11kV UG cables for the proposed construction of New Diversion Road for re-development work of Bengaluru Cantonment Railway station.	Rs. 2,02,56,273/-

Last date for submission of bids for:
Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 17-05-2024
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer (Construction)
PUB/39/AAD/PRB/SWR/2024-25 **Bengaluru Cantonment**
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

Jharkhand Urja Sancharan Nigam Ltd.
(CIN: U40108JH2013SGC001704)
Regd. Office: 2nd Floor, JUSNL (SLDC) Building, Kusai Colony, Doranda, Ranchi-02
(E-mail:cetjusnl@gmail.com)

2nd TIME EXTENSION NOTICE

Important date against NIT No. 732/PR/JUSNL/2023-24 for Design, Engineering, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of 220 kV D/C and 132 kV D/C transmission line for diversion of 220 kV S/C RCP- Joda (loc. 329 to 346) and 132 kV S/C Joda-Kendposi (loc. 292 to 312) transmission line under turnkey basis is hereby extended in following manner : -

End date and time of upload of BID	14.05.2024 up to 04:00 PM
BID Opening date for technical & commercial part	15.05.2024 at 04.00 PM

This extension notice is also available on the website **www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in**

PR No. 322828

स्वहित एवं राष्ट्रहित में ऊर्जा बचावें। कृपया अपनी शिकायतों को 18003456570 (कॉल सेन्टर) पर दर्ज करायें।

PR 324304 Jharkhand Urja Sancharan Nigam Ltd (24-25)_D

Sd/-
General Manager, C&M (NWBP)
JUSNL,Ranchi

Tipping point

With robust GST revenues, the next government must prioritise reforms

Revenues from the Goods and Services Tax (GST) crossed the ₹2 lakh crore mark for the first time in April. The month of April has usually delivered the highest GST kitty as it involves taxes paid for activity undertaken in March, when taxpayers close their books for the year, scurry to meet tax filing deadlines, and make adjustments to square off dues sought by the revenue department owing to oversights or interpretation differences. With slightly over ₹2.1 lakh crore of gross revenues, last month's GST collection was 12.4% higher than the April 2023 tally of ₹1.87 lakh crore, which marked the highest monthly intake prior to the latest data set. Minus the year-end effect, revenues in subsequent months will moderate so the ₹2 lakh crore figure may not be the new normal for monthly GST collections just yet. However, assuming the present momentum of the economy continues and GST revenue growth persists in last year's 11%-12% range, last April's high of ₹1.87 lakh crore could well be this year's monthly average. Bear in mind that the average monthly revenues last year were ₹1.68 lakh crore, and before the year began, the highest monthly collection was seen in April 2022, at ₹1,67,540 crore.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has termed last month's ₹2 lakh crore-plus GST revenues a "landmark", attributing them to a strong economy and efficient collections. This should put to rest the Centre's concerns from a few years ago that returns from the GST regime, now 82 months old, had been underwhelming. No doubt, sustained action against frauds, such as fake invoicing, and stricter compliance norms have helped shore up revenues. With central GST revenues overshooting last year's targets, meeting the goals set in the interim Budget for 2024-25 now requires less than 10% revenue growth. For the next government, the easy part would be to upgrade revenue targets in the full Budget. The more critical imperative is to plan and execute the expansion of the GST net, and expedite the long-awaited reboot of its complex rate structure to make it a truly simple tax for consumers and investors, now that revenue worries are relatively muted. Incidentally, the BJP's election manifesto, which takes credit for ringing in GST, only promises to make its portal simpler for small businesses to use. The Congress has assured a switch to a single, moderate tax rate with few exceptions, no levies on farm inputs, and sharing of revenues with panchayats and municipalities. Smart GST reforms, informed by stakeholder consultations, need to be at the forefront of the agenda of whoever comes into office, to correct anomalies that hold consumption back and set the foundations for the next virtuous cycle of investment and growth.

Eastern front

Polarisation of votes in West Bengal is edging out the Left and the Congress

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) nurtures high hopes in West Bengal, where it won 18 of the 42 seats, and 40% vote share in 2019. This dramatic rise from two seats in 2014 gave the party the confidence to present itself as the principal opposition in the 2021 Assembly polls, but the Mamata Banerjee-led All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) stormed back to power for a third term. With 77 of the 294 Assembly seats, and a 38.1% vote share, the BJP came a distant second. This year, the polling in the State is spread across all seven phases of the general election, and the BJP is pulling out all stops in the hope it could improve its tally which could also compensate for any electoral loss elsewhere. The BJP is keeping the TMC on the defensive with allegations of corruption, the land grab and sexual assault at Sandeshkhali, and the school recruitment scam. The Calcutta High Court terminated about 25,000 teacher appointments which is a shot in the arm for the BJP. The TMC's campaign against the BJP is centred on New Delhi's stoppage of funds to the State under central schemes and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. It is also banking on its cash transfer schemes such as Lakshmir Bhandar for women. Highlighting the issue of women's safety, the BJP has fielded a woman from Sandeshkhali, the constituency that saw reports of assault on women.

The BJP hopes to perform better in the districts of north Bengal, where it had won seven out of eight seats in 2019, while the Trinamool's focus is more in the southern districts with a high proportion of Muslim voters. For this, the TMC is also battling the Left-Congress coalition. The alliance may turn out to be a factor in certain seats in the minority-dominated districts of Malda and Murshidabad, and the decision of the Indian Secular Front to walk out of the alliance is likely to work to the advantage of the TMC. The BJP is bringing up Ram Mandir, violence during Ram Navami processions and the illegal movement of people across the India-Bangladesh border. Polarisation of voters on religious lines had helped the BJP in the 2019 Lok Sabha election and the Trinamool in the 2021 Assembly polls, edging out the Left and Congress from the field. The Trinamool is also harping on the Bengali identity by presenting itself as its custodian and portraying the BJP as an interloper and being insensitive to the interests of the State. For the BJP, West Bengal is not merely about winning more seats but is also about expanding its foothold into a region that claims exceptionalism. Some of the earliest arguments for a Hindu polity had originated in Bengal, and this gives the BJP hope.

The judiciary's shadow over standard essential patents

Prashant Reddy T.

is the co-author of 'Create, Copy, Disrupt: India's Intellectual Property Dilemmas' (2017)

There is a possible crisis brewing in India over the manner in which certain technology companies are wielding 'standard essential patents' (SEP) against the telecom manufacturing sector in India. This is a complex policy issue which has direct ramifications for India's effort to build a domestic manufacturing industry for cellular phones. So far, the issues of regulating SEPs have been left to the judiciary, which, as an institution, has mostly missed the ball.

To begin with, it is important to understand the importance of SEPs. These are patents that cover technologies which are adopted by the industry as "standards". For example, technologies such as CDMA, GSM, LTE are all industry standards in the telecom sector. Such technological standards are especially important to ensure interoperability of different brands of cellular phones manufactured by different companies. For example, once GSM was adopted as a standard, all manufacturers had to ensure that the handsets that they manufactured were compatible with GSM. Otherwise there would be no demand for their phones.

Opaque model

The process of setting standards in the technology sector is largely privatised and dominated by "standard setting organisations" (SSOs) run largely by private technology companies. Countries such as India with little innovation in the telecom sector, have very little influence over how standards are set or how SEPs are licensed.

Theoretically, the companies which own the SEPs, gain enormously because every manufacturer of cellular phones has to licence the technological standards in question in order to survive in the market. The lack of alternatives also means that owners of SEPs can demand extortionary royalties or licensing terms from manufacturers that block competition. In economics, this is called the "patent holdup" problem. In theory, the SSOs are supposed to prevent such a scenario by requiring the owners of SEPs to licence their technologies at a fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory (FRAND) rate.

In practice, this model of self-regulation by the technology industry has been marked with opacity and has failed rather spectacularly, as evidenced by the record fines that some of these SEP owners have had to cough up across the world for engaging in anti-competitive practices. The largest of these SEP owners, Qualcomm, has been fined $975 million by China (2015), $873 million by South Korea (2017), $774 million by Taiwan (2017) and $1.2 billion (2018) and another $272 million (2019) by the Europe Commission. Not all these fines have been sustained on appeal but are a useful indicator of how other countries have responded to the issue from a competition law perspective.

> The government must put in place measures to regulate standard essential patents before the judiciary causes further damage to India's manufacturing dreams

The effect of judicial lethargy and activism

The Indian response to the issue has been characterised by both judicial lethargy and judicial activism at the Delhi High Court. This may seem contradictory but a few facts will help explain how India landed in this situation.

In 2013, the Competition Commission of India (CCI), acting on a complaint by Micromax began an investigation under the Competition Act into the issue of whether Ericsson abused its dominant position by demanding extortionate royalties for its SEPs. Ericsson challenged the power of the CCI to do so, before the Delhi High Court, on the grounds that the Patents Act vested the power to remedy an abuse of patents only with the Patent Office.

The first round of litigation was resolved in favour of the CCI by a single judge on March 30, 2016. Ericsson then challenged this decision before the Division Bench of the Delhi High Court, where it remained pending for an astounding seven years until a judgment was delivered against the CCI on July 13, 2023. The CCI has appealed against this decision to the Supreme Court of India, where the matter remains pending. As a result, India is the only major economy to not yet investigate the potentially abusive licensing practices of technology companies that own SEPs.

While the competition law issues remained mired in litigation, the Delhi High Court proceeded to hear lawsuits filed by Ericsson and other SEPs owners against manufacturers of cellular phones on the question of whether the latter were infringing SEPs owned by the former and whether damages were payable. Ideally the infringement lawsuits should have been stayed until the competition law issues were resolved. The ordinary course of such litigation in most countries is for the courts to conduct a trial on the validity of the patents, whether there has been infringement and, if so, the damages payable. These trials are complex and can take time. For example, one of the early lawsuits filed by Ericsson against Lava International took eight years to be decided in a remarkable judgment, running into 500 pages, and delivered by Justice Amit Bansal of the Delhi High Court, recently.

The problem, however, is the manner in which Delhi High Court has granted "interim" remedies pending the conclusion of these long-winded trials. For the last decade, the Delhi High Court has short circuited the entire process by granting a series of orders requiring manufacturers, many of them Indian companies, to "deposit" money with the court in order to continue manufacturing during the pendency of the trial.

Such "deposit" orders, often running into crores of rupees, before trial, are unprecedented in the history of commercial law for the simple reason that there is no provision in the law granting judges such powers. In addition to being unprecedented, these orders are also unfair to defendants because they deprive them of working capital (which is very expensive in India) for the entire duration of the trial (which can take up to eight years).

Yet, such judicial activism has been justified by the Delhi High Court by invoking its "inherent powers to do justice". Such similar logic has been used in the past by the judiciary to justify activist measures such as "public interest litigation". That the same argument has been used to justify activism in the name of the oppressed and also in the name of multinational corporations demonstrates how specious an argument it was in the first place.

This judicial activism combined with judicial delays will have a negative impact on the government's attempt to attract more investment in the manufacturing sector. These measures, by government, have included payouts to manufacturers under the "production linked incentives" scheme for manufacturing in India. It is worth questioning the rationale of putting money in the pockets of manufacturers, while turning a Nelson's eye to the manner and the amount of money that is being removed from the same pockets by the owners of SEPs. More pertinently, unlike manufacturers who are investing in India to create jobs, the owners of SEPs are only taking their money out of the country.

The case of Europe

It is time for the Indian government to intervene and put in place measures to regulate SEPs before the judiciary causes further damage to India's manufacturing dreams. India will not be an outlier if it intervenes. The European Parliament has already enacted one such set of measures to regulate SEPs. India, arguably, has a much stronger case to push for similar, if not stronger regulatory measures, since it has no say in how SEPs are selected by SSOs, while also being compelled by international agreements to enforce patents of foreign technology companies.

Recognise 'this leave' as a woman's right

Rehnamol Raveendran

teaches political science at the University of Allahabad

Sometimes, elections throw up an acceptance of and solutions to deeply institutionalised gender biases and discrimination against women. In the run-up to the general election 2024, the election manifesto of the ruling political party in Tamil Nadu, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), has made a promise (under the topic "Women's welfare") that the "DMK will insist that the Union government enact a law providing menstrual leave to women, emphasizing the journey towards gender equality." This promise has been made after a debate in the 17th Lok Sabha, in December 2023, on menstrual leave, but with no outcome.

Legislators and Bills

In December 2021, S. Jothimani, Congress Member of Parliament (MP) from Tamil Nadu, had introduced a Private Member Bill named, 'Right to Menstrual Hygiene and Paid Leave Bill, 2019', which sought to bring menstrual leave into the ambit of the rights of a woman, and a refusal of such leave into the domain of The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. It also sought to impose a penalty for refusal.

The Bill that envisaged menstrual rights for women stipulates that every woman shall be entitled to the right to self-perception of her menstruation, including but not limited to menarche (first menstruation), menopause, menstrual cycle, primary or secondary dysmenorrhea (menstrual pain). The Bill sought remedies in the form of: rights, including paid leave for three days; right to leave or absence for three days for students above class eight; right to 30 minutes rest twice a day during the menstrual period for employees/workers, and right to menstrual hygiene management facilities and equity for all women.

Ninong Ering, who was a Congress MP from Arunachal Pradesh, introduced a private member Bill on menstrual leave in 2017 (the Menstruation Benefit Bill, 2017). This was followed by Shashi Tharoor, Congress MP from Kerala, introducing a similar Bill named The Women's Sexual, Reproductive and Menstrual Rights Bill, 2018. Hibi Eden, Congress MP from Kerala, also introduced a private member Bill titled The Right to Women to Menstrual Leave and Free Access to Menstrual Health Products Bill, 2022.

> A more pronounced stand by political parties on the issue of menstrual leave will boost women's rights and gender equality

The Supreme Court of India, early in 2023, refused to entertain a public interest litigation in *Shailendra Mani Tripathi vs Union of India* which sought direction to the state on menstrual leave; it was of the opinion that it is in the policy domain of the government. By December 2023, the central government refused to agree on such a policy, and the Bharatiya Janata Party manifesto for the general election 2024, the 'Sankalp Patra 2024', has made no mention of it. The Congress party's manifesto for the general election 2024, the 'Nyaya Patra' has also not mentioned menstrual leave, but under the subject of "Health" has promised that "all employers shall mandatorily grant paid maternity leave for their employees".

Progressive Indian States, Asian nations

History shows us that some States were ahead of the times. For instance, the Kerala Sahitya Academy published work, *Kerala in 19th Century*, mentions that Kerala was the first (in then Cochin State) to recognise the need for " period leave" for students and allowed it during examinations in 1912. In a recent progressive attempt, Kerala has encouraged the use of other menstrual hygiene products and made them available for students. Bihar, in 1992, allowed government employees two-day menstrual leave. Kerala, in January 2023, introduced menstrual and maternity leave to all students above the age of 18. Other States must be reminded that the existing laws are not a hindrance for State governments to go ahead and notify the right to menstrual leave.

On the other hand, many other Asian countries have ended the prejudices and stereotypes around menstruation using legislation. For instance, Japan introduced menstrual leave in 1947, Indonesia in 1948, and South Korea. Taiwan and Vietnam have also implemented paid leave. In relation to the Asian countries, the progress made by the western world, except in Sweden and Spain, is still abysmal. Several international organisations have promoted menstrual leave as a women's right. For instance, an International Labour Organisation report, in 2003, asked nations to recognise menstrual leave. The World Health Organization recognised a non-governmental organisation driven World Menstrual Hygiene Day on May 28 from 2014. However, India's new code on Social Security, 2020, passed by Parliament, which consolidated existing labour laws (yet to be notified), has not included the aspect of menstrual leave in its code.

Women labourers in the sugarcane fields of Maharashtra and agricultural labourers in Telangana have been documented to have hysterectomies as menstrual-related absences could endanger their livelihoods. It is time the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and laws governing industrial labour and other establishments recognise menstrual leave like the way progressive gig worker platforms such as Swiggy and Zomato have.

Greater gender sensitivity needed

Policy solutions to gender inequalities that are defined by differentiated gender experiences of women owing to socio-cultural and biological reasons will not only ensure equity but also bring new social change. The instrumentality of public policy and discussions on menstruation also lies in shattering taboos and creating a gender-sensitive world that is open to issues which are hitherto considered to be clandestine by conservative-gendered social standards. In the political domain, recognition of the issue by political parties this election season will be a major step to promote women's rights and gender equality.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hill stations, summer rush

There is no doubt that many of the hill stations in India, especially in the South, are facing grave environmental pressures caused by the massive influx of tourists. In connection with the e-pass plans for Kodaikanal and the Nilgiris, having battery-operated mini buses to all the important tourist spots in these hill stations, and at a fixed charge, can be thought of. Tourists could board and alight at their will after ensuring that these buses operate to all tourist locations every five minutes. All private cars should be left in specific parking spaces and not allowed to operate to these points. Chaotic parking of vehicles is a very common issue in the hills. The hills deserve better.

T. Murali,
Madurai

The water storage levels in many of the reservoirs in the Nilgiris are cause for worry. The district has had cloudless blue skies for long. It is also a fact that the residents of the Nilgiris will be thought of last when it comes to the rationing of water as the priority is to meet the needs of commercial establishments.

J.W. Prabakar,
Udhagamandalam, The Nilgiris

The peak summer season in the Nilgiris is only in May. Local people will be put to hardship if curbs are imposed on vehicular movement. This must be thought of in any move to impose a cap on the number of vehicles into the district.

N.R. Ramachandran,
Udhagamandalam, The Nilgiris

Uma Ramanan

The passing of playback singer Uma Ramanan is deeply saddening (May 2). It was her collaboration with her popular singer husband A.V. Ramanan, and star composer Ilaiyaraja, which catapulted her to nationwide stardom. Her unique voice earned her a special place in the hearts of music lovers. It is unfortunate that her great potential was not utilised by many music composers.

R. Sivakumar,
Chennai

Uma Ramanan sang some of the most soul-stirring melodies ever. Once while at a bus stop opposite a tea kiosk, her song, "*Aagaya Vennilavae*", began to play on the radio in the shop. It was one time when I wished that the bus would reach late as I wanted to listen to the song in full. Her songs will live forever.

T.S. Karthik,
Chennai

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name.

Does PMJAY need a design change?

Nachiket Mor

is Visiting Scientist, Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health

Avani Kapur

is Senior Visiting Fellow, Centre for Policy Research and Founder-Director, Foundation for Responsive Governance

PARLEY

Ayushman Bharat, the government's flagship programme to achieve universal health coverage (UHC), was launched in 2018. The scheme has two inter-related components: health and wellness centres and the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) that aims to provide a health cover of ₹5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation to over 12 crore families that form the bottom 40% of the population. PM-JAY has issued 34.27 crore cards. About 6.5 crore have received treatment and there are over 30,000 empanelled hospitals. However, over the past year, hospitals in some States have reported they are owed hundreds of crores in dues, and some are reportedly turning away or taking in fewer PMJAY patients. Does PMJAY need a design change? Avani Kapur and Nachiket Mor discuss the question in a conversation moderated by **Zubeda Hamid**. Edited excerpts:

Does PMJAY's design need to be changed to make the scheme more sustainable?

Nachiket Mor: PMJAY was required as there was a belief that while the public sector exists and is supposed to offer universal healthcare for free, there were deficiencies in what it could do. Therefore, there was a need to allow patients to access the private sector. I don't think this scheme was ever designed to deal with comprehensive universal health coverage or comprehensive healthcare costs – it is currently at under 2.5% of total health expenditure. Our research suggests that if you pool government departmental expenditure with PM-JAY expenditure in many States, government health expenditure may be enough to offer universal health coverage, including drugs and diagnostics. The reason we see high out-of-pocket expenditure in Kerala, for example, is that the public sector, despite being well funded, is unable to deliver universal healthcare. Its primary care is underutilised and there is enormous waste and inefficiency. I worry that if schemes are layered on top of a hospital-centric design, it exacerbates misallocation of government resources. In fact, there are distortions now: even a government hospital that is supposed to give you free care is now checking whether you're authorised to receive PMJAY. Why? Have we created a barrier now? Because, while a high-income family can handle a claim rejection or delay, a low-income family cannot. How can you deliver better healthcare to people to eliminate out-of-pocket expenditure? Where can the National Health Authority (NHA) and the State Health Authority (SHA), with their ability to purchase care in an organised, high quality manner, help you? I think that's the question we should pursue.

Avani Kapur: Nachiket spoke about the supply side, and I wanted to bring in the demand side. It's interesting that of empanelled hospitals, while 43% are private, the rest are government. There is a belief that a private hospital delivers better services and so people choose to go to a private hospital even when they have a public hospital close to them. It's possible that this is not just an assumption: in most places, the chances of getting better quality care in a private hospital could be higher than in a public hospital. We have not done enough to increase belief in the public health system.

Why would the private sector turn away patients? One, capacity. In many States, the number of people per empanelled healthcare provider (EHCP) is really high. In Bihar, it was over 10,000 families per EHCP. So, you don't necessarily have an adequate number of beds and facilities to be able to cater to that demand. Two, the delays in claim payments despite the guidelines being clear about turnaround time. Three, there are claim rejections too, which means a hospital takes in a patient, does the surgery, and then the insurance company rejects that claim because of documentation errors or a technicality. Four, the Union government has put a cap on the amount you can charge for different treatments. That doesn't always work well for private providers.

To deliver PMJAY will be difficult until the public sector is strengthened. This is because patients will choose to go to an already overburdened private player. Of course, private hospitals charge more and may do unnecessary procedures, but what is often not spoken about enough is that there is a burden on them because the public sector either isn't performing or people don't trust the sector to perform.

The Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Chest Diseases in Bengaluru. THE HINDU

How wide is the performance disparity among States under PMJAY?

AK: Not only do hospitals not exist [in many parts], but even empanelled hospitals haven't been active. In Uttar Pradesh, for instance, 39% have been inactive since empanellment, and only 50% have been active in the last six months. The States' [performances] vary. In coverage, some have been quite low compared to others, and even within States, the dispersion of hospitals is skewed. Governance processes make a big difference. In terms of claim payments, some States saw a delay of more than 45 days, while others paid the claims faster. What is also interesting is that there is a concentration of claims in Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. More research is needed to understand why this is the case.

> To deliver PMJAY will be difficult until the public sector is strengthened. This is because patients will choose to go to an already overburdened private player.
> **AVANI KAPUR**

NM: The issue of delays [in payments] should not have anything to do with poor or rich States; these are technology-enabled platforms. The fact is, in Shravasti district in U.P., for example, there isn't enough hospital capacity. This is the driver of these differences. In most jurisdictions around the world, there is an obligation for the insurer to have network adequacy. This means you can't offer an insurance scheme unless you have hospitals nearby. That restriction is not there in India, so you can offer a card to somebody even though there is no way for him to go and claim it. And that is a key deficiency in much of the northern and north-eastern States. And that's where we need to pay attention. The private sector is unlikely to go to Bastar and build a hospital. It would have to be led by the public sector for the foreseeable future.

India's out-of-pocket expenditure for health has decreased, but it still hovers around the 47-50% mark, which is much higher than global average. Do we need to look at a system where outpatient care, diagnostics and drugs can also be covered?

NM: We are making an error in equating PMJAY and health and wellness centres with government efforts on the healthcare side. The largest component of healthcare expenditures are government expenditures through the State and Centre and they are multiples higher than what these two schemes are doing. These are supposed to include outpatient (OP) care: in fact, the bulk of the expenditure is on drugs and OP care. Are there governments (in the world) that have a separate government-financed public sector and then added an insurance layer on top of it? I have not seen [this] because it adds to the fragmentation of the overall health landscape. And that is something we need to address to solve the problem of out-of-pocket expenditure.

AK: In the current design and given the fiscal cost, it may be too much to expect the current model of PMJAY to cover everything. But there are lots of interesting State schemes that are taking care of providing free medicines: Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan are doing great work in trying to provide some form of universal healthcare. India is ranked 67th out of 189 countries in terms of out-of-pocket expenditure. Also, the Union government is meant to allocate 60% of PMJAY funds, but the amount [it is] actually spending is less than this. In some ways, PMJAY was designed to take care of [healthcare cost] shocks, as inpatient treatments can cost a lot relative to outpatient treatments. But we need to think about it in its entirety rather than looking at it as bits and pieces.

The government said this was a step towards providing UHC. Would you argue that the insurance model is not correct for India's path towards achieving UHC? Has any other country been able to achieve it through an insurance model?

NM: The insurance model, if defined narrowly as separating the money from the provider, and not giving budget-based allocations but saying to the provider that if you perform, then you get paid – in India, my own belief is that the insurance model, if restricted exclusively to the public sector, could have a big impact on its performance, particularly in the poorer States. It's almost become the only way many countries have delivered UHC, such as Thailand, Turkey, Vietnam, and Uruguay. India's current model is no longer the dominant model. That is what is exciting to me about the NHA/SHA – we have the capacity to implement something like this. But it wouldn't be in the way you're thinking about insurance perhaps, which is indemnity: I file a claim, I get refunded. Those approaches are a pathway to bad outcomes. This is the error Medicare/Medicaid made in the U.S. in 1965 - it led to massive inflation in healthcare prices. But with the purchaser-provider split, I would say it is the only idea that can take us forward, but if we restrict it only to the public sector and bring all the multiple pools of money together.

AK: I agree. I don't think in its current design, insurance is going to yield what we want it to yield, which is not just reducing out-of-pocket expenditure, but also ensuring quality care. A recent paper on low- and middle-income countries and health insurance said the issue is not just whether government subsidy should be channelled through health insurance or direct subsidies to public facilities, but how do you reach a system where you have specific payment structures and non price mechanisms that can actually change both provider behaviour and also patient choice? In its current form, I don't think PM-JAY is going to get us there unless we focus a lot more on the public health system.

To listen to the full interview
Scan the code or go to the link
www.thehindu.com

NOTEBOOK

The difficulty of learning how opinions are shaped

During elections, it is a challenge to separate the voter's own personal experience or opinion from propaganda

Sobhana K. Nair

Every time I have travelled to rural areas in India during elections, I have run into astute voters who are aware of every aspect of the candidates in the fray, including how many times they have switched parties, and well-versed with the caste equations of the constituency. This hyper awareness is helpful for a reporter. It makes our lives easier when we meet a respondent who is knowledgeable, eager to engage, and does not need to be persuaded to speak.

However, the penetration of the Internet and mobile phone has also meant a surge in disinformation. The challenge then is to separate the voter's own personal experience or opinion from propaganda. Establishing this distinction is essential to understanding the impact of various election campaigns and what may influence voter choices.

In the run-up to the 2017 Uttar Pradesh elections, while touring the western part of the State, I heard a common complaint among people belonging to upper castes and non-Yadav backward communities against the incumbent government led by Akhilesh Yadav of the Samajwadi Party. They lamented that the government had been building boundary walls for graveyards, even as it took away land from cremation grounds. Nearly a week later, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at an election rally, "If you create a *kabristaan* (graveyard) in a village, then a *shamshaan* (cremation ground) should also be created. If electricity is given uninterrupted in Ramzan, then it should be given in Diwali without a break." In hindsight, I feel I should have asked the people whether their opinion was based on their own experiences or whether they had heard this elsewhere. I did not know whether the Prime Minister's comments indicated that his party had its ear to the ground or whether he was merely amplifying propaganda that had already been running.

This election, in Churu, Rajasthan, I found that people feared that reservation would be scrapped. This time, I asked for the source. Why did they think reservation would go? Pat came the reply: they had heard an election speech of BJP candidate Jyoti Mirdha, who was contesting from the Naguar Lok Sabha seat, on WhatsApp. Building a case for voting the BJP and its allies to at least 400 seats, she spoke of "tough decisions" that needed to be taken in the "country's interest" and that needed constitutional amendments. However, neither her speech nor the reactions to it from the Opposition, which has run a consistent campaign against the BJP saying the "Constitution is in danger", mentioned any scrapping of reservation. I was puzzled.

Then, miles away in Chhattisgarh, I heard people voicing this fear again. It was clearly not Ms. Mirdha's words that had prompted this reaction in Chhattisgarh. When I probed further, the voters said they had been hearing about reservation for the last three or four months. One of them mentioned Mr. Modi saying in a speech in November 2023 that among all the "caste groups", he considered four the biggest – "the poor, the youth, women, and farmers." Mr. Modi's remarks were a counter to the Congress's demand for a caste census. But the voters believed, not without a nudge from the principal Opposition party, the Congress, that if the reality of caste is ignored, then so will reservation.

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PICTURE OF THE WEEK

In the grip of a heatwave

Women draw water from a well on a hot day in Kasara, a town in Thane district in Maharashtra. Maharashtra has registered 25 deaths from heat stroke since late March, the highest toll in the past five years. Scientists have linked the early onset of an intense summer to climate change. REUTERS

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 3, 1974

Talks if Ry. strike notice is withdrawn: Mishra

New Delhi, May 2: By an overwhelming majority, the Lok Sabha to-day rejected an adjournment motion to censure the Government on the arrest of Mr. George Fernandes and other important Railway labour leaders early this morning after a stormy debate. Mr. L.N. Mishra, Railway Minister, vigorously defended the action of the Government and said this was done because Mr. Fernandes was working for a strike even as negotiations were going on.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 3, 1924

Plaintiff in the box

London, May 2: Sir Michael O' Dwyer was in the box all Thursday. In cross-examination he denied he had been guilty of tyranny, but was attacked for his opinions by the members of the would-be oligarchy. Sir Sankaran Nair's book was translated and circulated in the vernacular by most provincial Governments.

From Page One

Prajwal booked for rape; lookout circular issued

In view of the lookout circular, Mr. Prajwal will be detained as soon as he reports at any of the immigration points at airports, sea ports, or at border checkposts. SIT sources said his return ticket has been booked for May 15. An advocate claiming to represent the Hassan MP had sought seven days' time for his client to present himself before the SIT. External Affairs Ministry spokesperson A. Randhir Jaiswal said that they were not approached for "political clearance"; nor did the Ministry issue any clearance for enabling foreign travel by Mr. Prajwal. "No political clearance was either sought from or issued by the MEA in respect of the travel of the said MP to Germany. Obviously, no visa note was issued either. No visa is required for diplomatic passport holders to travel to Germany," he said.

The Hassan MP has now been suspended by the Janata Dal (Secular). He is seeking re-election from the Hassan Lok Sabha constituency where he is pitted against Congress nominee Shreyas Patel.

India protests Chinese road work in PoK valley

"We have registered our protest with the Chinese side against illegal attempts to alter facts on the ground. We further reserve the right to take necessary measures to safeguard our interests," Mr. Jaiswal added.

The Shaksgam Valley is part of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, and was ceded by Pakistan to China in 1963, a year after the India-China war. Recent satellite pictures indicate that China is building a road into the lower Shaksgam valley. This has also been confirmed by official sources. The Siachen glacier is a piece of Indian territory wedged between China and Pakistan. The 2020 standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh has made the control of Siachen even more critical for India. China has undertaken a massive build-up and deployment along the Line of Actual Control, especially in eastern Ladakh, threatening Indian positions in Depsang and Daulat Beg Oldie.

Law and order is a State subject, says SC

The hearing before Justice Gavai's Bench was based on an original suit filed by West Bengal under Article 131 of the Constitution against the Union government. The State alleged that CBI was probing several cases and registering FIRs within its jurisdiction without taking prior consent from the West Bengal government. Mr. Sibal said the State had withdrawn prior consent under Section 6 of the Delhi Police Special Establishment Act to CBI investigations within its territory on November 16, 2018.

"It is not our case that there should be no investigation in these cases. But you cannot claim I have a unilateral right to investigate them by giving the Code of Criminal Procedure a go-by. You cannot say that the offences relating to Central government employees will be investigated only by a Central agency," Mr. Sibal submitted. Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for the Union government, said the original suit of the State was not maintainable and should be dismissed by the court. He raised the preliminary objection that disputes in original suits filed under Article 131 in the apex court exclusively involve the Union and the States.

Suspense over Amethi, Rae Bareli continues

Mallikarjun Kharge meets Rahul Gandhi to finalise candidates; today is the last day for filing nominations for the two key seats in Uttar Pradesh

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

With Friday being the last day for filing nominations for the Amethi and Rae Bareli seats in Uttar Pradesh that go to the polls on May 20, sources said Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had a meeting with senior leader Rahul Gandhi at Shivamogga in Karnataka, where the two addressed an election rally.

There was no information on the outcome of the meeting. There is intense speculation that Mr. Gandhi may return to Amethi, a seat he lost in 2019 to Union Minister and BJP leader Smriti Irani.

Mr. Gandhi had won the seat in 2004, 2009, and 2014. In 2019, he contested from Wayanad in addition to Amethi. This time too, he is in the fray from Wayanad.

There is also speculation that Mr. Gandhi could shift to Rae Bareli, which is deemed to be a "safer seat". His mother and former Congress president Sonia Gandhi represented the seat from 2004. She opted out of the Lok Sabha election race this year, choosing to enter Parliament through the Rajya Sabha instead.

Awaiting decisions: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, with AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge, at an election campaign in Karnataka. ANI

The Congress has won Rae Bareli 17 times since the first general election. The seat was first represented by Feroze Gandhi and later on three occasions by Indira Gandhi. In 1977, Janata Party leader Raj Narain famously defeated Indira Gandhi here.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's name has also been doing the rounds for one of the two seats. On Friday, Ms. Vadra is scheduled to address a roadshow in Fatehpur Sikri, some 500 km away from both Amethi and Rae Bareli.

Sources, however, claimed that she remains reluctant to make her electoral debut.

West Bengal Governor accused of harassment

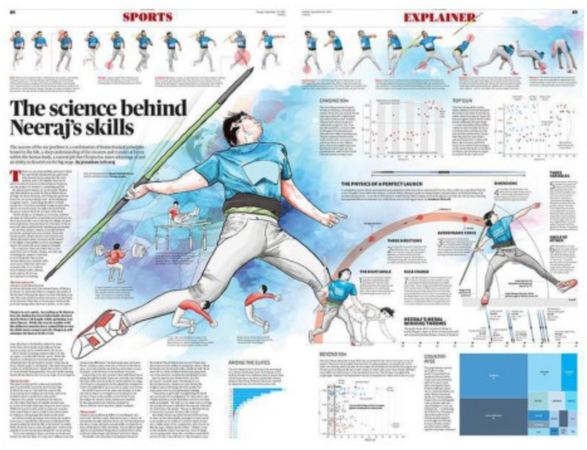
The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

An employee at the Raj Bhavan in Kolkata on Thursday alleged that she was sexually harassed by West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose. The woman lodged a complaint at the Hare Street police station in Kolkata.

The allegation came hours before Prime Minister Narendra Modi was scheduled to arrive at the Raj Bhavan for a night stay. He is scheduled to address three election rallies in West Bengal on Friday.

Reacting to the allegations, Mr. Bose said he would not be cowed down by engineered narratives. "... If anybody wants some election benefits by maligning me, God bless them. But they cannot stop my fight against corruption and violence in Bengal," the Raj Bhavan said in a statement, quoting the Governor.

The ruling Trinamool Congress said the "sanctity of Raj Bhavan has been tarnished".



The prizewinning explainer page dated September 3, 2023.

The Hindu wins top awards at international design competition

The Hindu Bureau

The Hindu's explainer page on Neeraj Chopra's craft and success, "The science behind Neeraj's skills", published on September 3, 2023, has won three awards at the 6th International Newspaper Design Competition organised by newspaperdesign.in.

'Standout sports page'

The Hindu won the 'Best of show' award; 'Gold' in the 'Best of Sports Page' category; and an award of excellence in the 'Best of Double Spread' category. The judges noted that the "standout sports page of the competition was layered with information organised on a simple grid around world-class illustrations" and every part of this page informs and engages readers. They went on to add that the pages were a "great balance of strong visuals, detailed explainers and well-edited narrative text that combined to deliver a medal-winning experience".

BJP fields Karan, Brij Bhushan's son, from Kaiserganj

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday announced the candidature of Karan Bhushan Singh, son of six-time MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, from the Kaiserganj Lok Sabha constituency. The party announced Uttar Pradesh Minister Dinesh Pratap Singh as its candidate from Rae Bareli.

In Kaiserganj, the ruling party denied ticket to Mr. Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who is accused of sexually harassing women wrestlers, but ticket has been given to his son, a decision taken after consulting the six-time Lok Sabha member.

"The BJP had to give ticket to someone from Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh's family as he wields considerable influence in the region and has won the seat three consecutive times," Rajnikant Tripathi, a Lucknow-based political analyst, said.

Karan Bhushan Singh

In Rae Bareli, the BJP is again pitting Mr. Dinesh Pratap Singh, an influential local Rajput leader who contested against senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi in the 2019 parliamentary polls. Even though he lost, he reduced the margin of defeat in the Congress bastion by over 1,60,000 votes. He polled 3,67,740 (38.36%) votes against Ms. Gandhi's 5,34,918 votes (55.80%). In the 2014 Lok Sabha election, the BJP lost the seat by over 3,50,000 votes.

EC asks political parties to cease registering voters for post-poll welfare schemes

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday directed all political parties to cease enrolling or registering voters for post-election beneficiary-oriented schemes under the "guise of surveys", saying it amounts to corrupt practice under election law.

The poll body said some political parties and candidates have been engaging in activities that blur the lines between legitimate surveys and partisan efforts to register individuals for post-election beneficiary-oriented schemes.

BJP's complaint

A potential *quid pro quo* for voting and inducements amounts to bribery or corrupt practice, the EC said in an advisory to all national and regional political parties.

The Election Commission advisory comes following a complaint by the BJP.

The EC advisory comes following a complaint by the BJP which had said that the Congress's "*Ghar Ghar* Guarantee" outreach to people was a "corrupt practice amounting to bribery" and urged the poll body to put a stop to it. Under this initiative, the BJP claimed that the Congress and its workers are distributing "guarantee cards" to households, presenting them with application papers for accessing the party's promised benefits.

In its advisory, the EC cited five instances that "obscure the distinction between legitimate surveys and biased attempts to enrol people in programmes for political gain, all while masquerading as legitimate survey activities or efforts to inform people about government programmes or party agendas related to potential individual benefits".

These included newspaper advertisements urging voters to register themselves for benefits by giving missed calls on a mobile or calling on a telephone number, distribution of guarantee cards giving details of schemes along with an attached form asking for details of voters and distribution of forms seeking details and seeking online registration.

'Instead of hate speeches, seek votes on performance'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be remembered as someone who "indulged in divisive and communal speeches filled with lies to avoid an inevitable defeat", Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge said in a letter to Mr. Modi. He also rebutted the various charges levelled by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the ongoing election campaign.

The letter has been framed as a response to Mr. Modi's missive to the BJP candidates asking them to spread awareness among voters of the Congress's intention to snatch "reservation from SC, ST, and OBC communities and give it away to their vote bank". He urged Mr. Modi to seek votes on the performance of his government over the last 10 years instead of indulging in "hate speeches".

Guarantee cards: Congress gateway to voters' minds

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

Every morning, between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m., before the heat rises, Congress worker Basvaraj Ajari Ghadhinglaj, 55, goes door-to-door armed with the party's "guarantee card" in the Kolhapur Lok Sabha constituency of Maharashtra.

While the Congress manifesto has been in the limelight with sustained attacks from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the guarantees that sum up the manifesto have become a conversation starter with voters for workers like Mr. Ghadhinglaj.

Questions arising

The cards are printed in Marathi, making it easier for him to explain the five *Nyays* and 25 guarantees that the Congress is promising to deliver if it comes to power. The party has printed over eight crore cards in 12 languages. In the last week that he has been doing the rounds with the cards, the conversation follows a familiar pattern.

As he reads out the promises – usually to a group of men – curious women of the household stroll in midway with questions. The talk often gets redirected to the rising prices of essential commodities. He utilises the opportunity to reel off comparative prices of food items, fuel, and LPG cylinders, during the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) years and Mr. Modi's 10-year tenure.

"One of the questions that is often being asked, is 'how will the Congress find money to deliver all these promises?' I simply point to our neighbouring State Karnataka, where our government has already delivered on all the promises," he remarks. It helps that Kolhapur is located on the Maharashtra-Karnataka boundary.

The promise that draws the most enthusiasm is the Mahalakshmi Scheme. "When I tell them that they will receive ₹8,500 each month if they vote for the Congress, they are sceptical at first. Then comes a barrage of questions and our conversation usually ends with squeals of approval as they count the possible ways they could use this money," Purnima Semariya, who is going door-to-door in Chhattisgarh's Sarguja constituency, said.

Promises to keep: Congress candidates say that the 'guarantee cards' serve as great conversation starters with voters. ANI

Ms. Semariya is glad that instead of pamphlets that she carried around in the 2019 election, she has cards that lend the promises a more concrete air. "It feels good that we are not asking for votes, we are making promises," Ms. Semariya added.

The Congress has always been criticised for being top-heavy and disconnected from the ground realities in sharp contrast to the BJP's dense network of *Panna Pramukhs* (those in charge of each page of the electoral roll).

In January, the party began an exercise to change this. It instituted a central war room, headed by former IAS officer Sasikanth Senthil. The average age of the five members of the war room is 39, signalling a generational shift in the decision-making process. Mr. Senthil headed the war room during the Karnataka and Telangana elections too. The 2024 war room is replicating the processes that were successfully tested in these two States. A chain of workers was created extending from the war room in Delhi to the block level in all States.

Change of focus

Mr. Senthil believes that the Congress's 2024 campaign is materially different from their 2019 one. "Our focus in 2019 was on the narrative, today our focus is on the cadre and organisation," he said. Each State capital has a war room that, in turn, coordinates with districts and blocks. Mr. Senthil insists that they be called "connect centres".

A call from Delhi, he said, makes a strong connection with the worker on the ground, and that is what these centres are designed for. For the worker, the guarantee cards, in turn, forge their connection with the voter. Each card carries the signatures of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and former President Rahul Gandhi. "It is a tangible assurance from our end," he added.

The Congress also sees this pithy card as a tool to counter the attack on its manifesto from the BJP. "Guarantee cards are an effective weapon in the hand of the karyakarta to counter the disinformation being spread by the BJP on the Congress manifesto," vice-chairman of the central war room, Varun Santhosh, said.

POCSO Act's objective can't be ignored: SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said the objective of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act could not be ignored merely because child marriages continue, or worse still, abusers marry their minor victims to escape conviction.

"What is the assurance that he will not abandon her after avoiding conviction?" Justice A.S. Oka asked in court.

The top court was dealing with the case of kidnap and rape of a 14-year-old girl in West Bengal. Her mother had registered an FIR. However, she is currently living with her child and the accused, whom the trial court had convicted under the POCSO Act.

Deciding his appeal against conviction, the Calcutta High Court, in October last year, had acquitted the 20-year-old man, concluding that both had been romantically linked.

APPEAL

Master Naresh Potani Son of Amit Potani 4 years admitted in Mazumdar Shaw Medical Center, is suffering from Thalassemia Major. The only curative treatment is Bone Marrow Transplant. We are planning TCR Alpha / Beta and CD 45RA Depletion Therapy for this patient. The estimated cost of the transplant in this hospital is approximately **Rs. 41,50,000/-**. Please send donation however small and save the boy. Cheque/D.D/M.O. favouring **Save Poor Lives** A/c Naresh Potani. **Our Account Details:** S/B Account No. 20000913487. State Bank of India, R.A. Puram and IFSC CODE: SBIN0001855, you can donate through Google Pay No. **9884607377**, UPI ID: **savepoorlives@oksbi**. All donations are exempted under 80G of I.T. ACT.

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ELECTIONS 2024

Naveen Patnaik, Pradhan file nominations

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday filed nomination for the Kantabanji Assembly seat in Balangir district, the second seat after his traditional Hinjili constituency for the Odisha Assembly election. His selection of Kantabanji as the second seat assumes significance as it is closer to three Lok Sabha seats — Balangir, Kalahandi and Bargarh — which are BJP strongholds.

The day saw heavyweights filing nomination for the Lok Sabha poll. Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and former Minister Jual Oram filed papers from Sambalpur and Sundargarh, respectively. BJP spokesperson Aparajita Sarangi filed papers from Bhubaneswar while BJD leader and former Mumbai Police Commissioner Arup Patnaik filed papers from Puri.

Naveen Patnaik filing papers for the Kantabanji seat on Thursday. BISWARANJAN ROUT

Baramulla fight is against Delhi's might, RSS: NC

National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah, who filed his nomination papers from the Baramulla seat on Thursday, said he was "up against Delhi's might and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)".

"Voters in the Baramulla constituency have to make a simple choice on May 20. Whether they want to vote for a local representative in Parliament or send a Delhi's representative to Parliament. We have a direct contest with Delhi's might and Nagpur's RSS. They have fielded their men against the NC and the INDIA bloc candidates on all seats in Kashmir," Mr. Abdullah said. "We will fight for the snatched rights. I will ensure I take the struggle to Parliament and work hard, even though the opponent is very shrewd," he said.

"J.P. Nadda has become Jhooth Prachar Nadda... He said Cong.'s thinking on economic inequalities is Maoist in nature. There cannot be a bigger lie

JAIRAM RAMESH
Congress leader

Congress fields Tsering Namgyal from Ladakh

The Congress on Thursday fielded Tsering Namgyal from the Ladakh Lok Sabha seat.

The Congress's central election committee has approved the name of Tsering Namgyal as the candidate to contest the poll from Ladakh, an official communication from the party said. PTI

"A majority of the leaders of the INDIA bloc, including those of the Congress and RJD, are either in jail or out on bail. RJD means corruption

J.P. NADDA
BJP president

Family feud: NCP (SP) candidate for Baramati, Supriya Sule, during her campaign in Jejuri. PTI

In Baramati, the Pawars battle it out for supremacy

Shoumojit Banerjee
PUNE

As the 83-year-old Nationalist Congress Party (SP) chief Sharad Pawar takes on his nephew, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, for control of Baramati, which goes to the polls on May 7, the paterfamilias of the Pawar family and Maharashtra's politics faces the toughest contest of his life.

Mr. Sharad Pawar's daughter, Supriya Sule (the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi's candidate and incumbent Baramati MP), is pitted against Mr. Ajit's wife, Sunetra Pawar (the ruling *Mahayuti*'s candidate), and the contest is leavened with high political drama which has seen bitter foes turning into overnight friends across the six Assembly segments in the Lok Sabha constituency.

On paper, the arithmetic seems to favour Mr. Ajit and the *Mahayuti* as his 'palace revolution' in July last year, which split the NCP founded by his uncle in 1999, has completely upset the political balance in Baramati.

As a result, Mr. Sharad Pawar (and Ms. Sule) today has no MLA in the NCP (SP) camp. The father and daughter are dependent on the goodwill of their Maha Vikas Aghadi ally, the Congress, which holds the Bhor and Purandar segments.

Khadakwasla, which has the largest concentration of voters (4.7 lakh), is firmly in the grip of the ruling BJP. So is the Daund Assembly segment, whose legislator is the BJP's Rahul Kul.

His wife, Kanchan Kul, was the saffron party's candidate in the 2019 general election. While Ms. Sule coasted to victory with a comfortable margin of more than 1.5 lakh votes, Ms. Kul performed creditably, garnering more than 40% of the vote share as opposed to Ms. Sule's 52%.

Both Khadakwasla and Daund had voted against Ms. Sule (and the NCP) in the last election.

This leaves the other two Assembly segments – Baramati and neighbouring Indapur, both totally dominated by Mr. Ajit.

Last time, it was Mr. Ajit, as Ms. Sule's "campaign manager" in the undivided NCP, who had ensured a lead of 1.25 lakh votes for his cousin from the key Baramati Assembly segment alone. (Mr. Ajit has been an MLA from Baramati a record seven times since 1991).

This time around, Mr. Ajit, along with the BJP top brass and the NDA alliance, have thrown their full weight behind Ms. Sunetra.

A key region in western Maharashtra, Baramati has its politics revolving round influential sugar barons and political clans in this region.

Given the intense rivalry between the Pawar family and other prominent political families here, Mr. Ajit and the *Mahayuti* gained considerable success in mending fences with old rivals.

According to observers, a defeat for Ms. Sunetra would pose a big question mark on Mr. Ajit's political future in *Mahayuti*.

If Ms. Sule loses, it would mean the twilight of Baramati's idol – Mr. Sharad.

Either way, the last verse of this Homeric tussle between the Pawars has yet to be written.

In the BJP's scheme of things, good politics is good economics

Hindutva ideology believes that India's growth is because of nationalism and not in spite of it; under the ideology, the Ram temple is not seen as a distraction from, or barrier to, India's development, but as an essential foundation and catalyst for it

NEWS ANALYSIS

Varghese K. George
NEW DELHI

"If only his politics were as good as his economics" – this is a familiar refrain in liberal commentaries about Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The suggestion is that there is a disconnect between Mr. Modi's economic policies that liberal commentators approve of, and his Hindutva politics that they disapprove of.

The merits of the arguments about Mr. Modi's economics and politics apart, this liberal view is formed by an inadequate appreciation of Hindutva as an ideology, and an unquestioning adherence to the dubious claim that liberal democratic politics and free market capitalism are inevitable cohabitants.

Hindutva understands the link between politics and economics differently. The free market slogan, "good economics is good politics", works in the inverse in the Hindutva scheme of things, as "good politics is good economics". This is a strand of thought that runs through all of Mr. Modi's speeches, but the one he made during the consecration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya in January 2024, a milestone in the BJP's political journey, is particularly instructive.

Different formula: During the consecration of the Ram temple, Narendra Modi said that by embracing tradition and modernity, Bharat will reach the goals of prosperity by walking on both these paths. PTI

Cultural politics

Connecting the country's material progress to the resurgence of cultural politics, he said: "We are witnessing that this construction is not causing any fire, but, in fact, is giving birth to energy... Embracing the sacredness of tradition and the endless possibilities of modernity, Bharat will reach the goals of prosperity by walking on both these paths." Far from being a distraction from the development agenda, or a barrier to it, the temple is an essential foundation, and a catalyst for that agenda, by implication.

This idea is common to all forms of economic nationalism, and Hindutva is only a more strident variant of that. Consolidation of national identity through cultural tropes is not in contradiction with ambitions in the fields of economy or technology, or in global standing. In fact, it is cultural assertion and consolidation that leads to progress, growth, and prosperity. Not only that, in the absence of this cultural politics, no material progress is possible, according to the nationalist view. And cultural nationalism protects the economic interests of the country as a whole, as opposed to the particular interests of groups within that might want to undermine national sovereignty in pursuit of profits globally. To paraphrase Stephen Bannon, a champion of current American nationalism, "it has an economy, but a nation is not an economy".

Historically, nationalism sees politics as the mover of economics and not the other way round. India's national movement questioned the development claims of the colonial government on this ground, asserting that unless there was a national government, progress and development would not arrive.

The Bharatiya Janata Party has taken this to the next level to argue that the development claims of the Congress's nationalism were unachievable because of its inadequate cultural moorings, or even its continuing association with colonial ideas and institutions.

Hindutva is a comprehensive scheme that encompasses all facets of the individual and collective lives of the people. But it is not a static one, and has been dynamically evolving over time, as it confronted new questions. Its early proponents clearly identified the opportunity provided by universal franchise to build a Hindu polity. It believes that progress is possible only when Hindus are united.

Global liberals think that India's growth is in spite of nationalism, but Hindutva thinks it is because of it. It could be called the "Hindutva rate of growth" in contradistinction to the phrase "the Hindu rate of growth", which denoted the slow growth of the pre-liberalisation era.

V.K. Pandian

I am successor to Naveen's great values, says Pandian

Press Trust of India
BHUBANESWAR

Unfazed by the 'outsider' barb from his opponents, Naveen Patnaik's closest associate V.K. Pandian has said he is a "natural successor" to all the great values of the Odisha Chief Minister and that he would do everything under the sun to help his "guru" serve the people of the State.

In a no-holds-barred attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Mr. Pandian said it is the ruling party at the Centre that has done nothing for the 'Odiya Asmita' or for promoting the language, art and culture of the State despite repeated pleas by the Chief Minister.

Asked about his being seen as a successor to Mr. Patnaik, Mr. Pandian said, "I'm a natural successor to all the great values he possesses, whether it's his impeccable integrity, his commitment to the people of Odisha, his hard work, punctuality, sincerity, everything."

Big names try their luck in Madhya Pradesh's battle royale

Mehul Malpani
GUNA

Political fortunes of two former Chief Ministers and a Union Home Minister and the control of the crucial Gwalior-Chambal region will be at stake when voters from nine constituencies in Madhya Pradesh vote on May 7.

In Phase 3 of the election in the State, BJP candidate Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who was the State's longest serving Chief Minister, is returning to his traditional Vidisha constituency after nearly 20 years.

Another former Chief Minister, Congress veteran Digvijaya Singh, is contesting from his home turf Rajgarh after 30 years. Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, who lost his family seat of Guna as a Congress candidate in 2019, is hoping to regain the constituency on BJP ticket.

Apart from these seats, Morena, Bhind (SC) and Gwalior seats of the crucial Gwalior-Chambal belt, and Bhopal, Sagar, and Betul (ST) will also vote on May 7.

At present, all the nine seats are held by the ruling BJP, but emerging equations from some constituencies have led observers to believe that the upcoming phase could be the Congress' best shot in the State.

The party has intensified its campaigning for the third phase with Rahul Gandhi holding a rally in Bhind and warning voters that the BJP will "throw away" the Constitution if it returns to power.

From the BJP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and national president J.P. Nadda have campaigned in Morena, Betul and Rajgarh.

BJP candidate from Guna Jyotiraditya Scindia addressing a public meeting at Athai Kheda village in Madhya Pradesh. A.M. FARUQUI

Diverse regions

Spread across a large portion of the State, the constituencies fall under different regions and have varying demography and issues. The northern-most Gwalior-Chambal region that shares boundaries with Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan is heavily influenced by caste politics. Unemployment, poverty and migration are the key issues in the tribal-dominated Betul.

Mr. Chouhan had vacated the Vidisha constituency in 2005 when he was chosen to lead the BJP's government in the State. The 65-year-old held the State's top post until 2023, barring a 15-month period when the Congress was in power from 2018 to 2020. And though he was not declared the BJP's face in the 2023 Assembly election, Mr. Chouhan is credited to have defied the anti-incumbency trend and led the party to a resounding majority.

However, Mr. Chouhan, fondly called *Mama*, was replaced as Chief Minister with a younger face, Ujjain MLA Mohan Yadav. After a few months of suspense over his future role, Mr. Chouhan is back for a sixth term from Vidisha, a constituency he held from 1991 to 2005. He is facing senior Congress leader Bhanu Pratap Sharma, 77, who represented the seat from 1980 to 1984.

Another stalwart, Mr. Singh is working to reignite his old connect in Rajgarh as he takes on the BJP's two-time MP Rodmal Nagar who is facing anti-incumbency sentiments.

Mr. Singh, fondly called *Raja Saheb*, hails from the erstwhile royal family of Rajgarh's Raghogarh and his family has long enjoyed a dominance in the region as he held the seat for two terms and his brother Laxman Singh held it for five terms, including once with the BJP.

Mr. Singh, 77, known for his hold on the Congress' organisation across the State, is using a localised approach to campaign, while also trying to strike an emotional chord declaring that this is his last election.

The Congress leader, however, has an uphill task in bridging Mr. Nagar's 2019 victory margin of 4.31 lakh as he will look to overcome the BJP's popularity among the OBCs in the constituency and the Hindutva factor.

Reclaiming the bastion

In Guna, Mr. Scindia, the scion of the erstwhile Gwalior kingdom, looks to reclaim his family's bastion that he had lost in 2019 when he was with the Congress.

This will be Mr. Scindia's first election since he shifted to the BJP in March 2020, leading a rebellion with 22 MLAs to bring down the Kamal Nath-led Congress government.

The BJP fielded him after denying ticket to incumbent MP K.P. Yadav, who had defeated Mr. Scindia last time. In a replication of the BJP's 2019 strategy, the Congress has fielded Rao Yadvendra Singh Yadav, who had switched sides just before the 2023 Assembly election, hoping to consolidate votes of the Yadav community.

While Mr. Singh and Mr. Scindia have limited themselves to campaigning in their respective constituencies, Mr. Chouhan has been touring the State to campaign for party candidates as the people in Vidisha say that he appears comfortable in one of BJP's safest seats in the State.

One of the most keenly watched contest will be from Morena in the Chambal belt as the Congress hopes to wrest the seat from the BJP after nearly three decades. The seat is locked in a three-way fight with the BSP, despite the downward trend in its vote share, continuing to have a significance presence in the area.

Bhind (SC) and Gwalior are expected to see caste equations play a major role in the polls with voters and local BJP leaders admitting that the Congress' candidate selection has made the contests more intense.

INBRIEF

ED gets custody of Haryana Congress MLA's son till May 6

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has taken the custody of Sikandar Singh Chhoker, son of Congress MLA Dharam Singh Chhoker, in the case of Sai Aaina Farms Private Limited and others for allegedly siphoning off hundreds of crores of homebuyers' money related to multiple projects in Gurugram, the agency said on Thursday. It is alleged that Mr. Sikandar had been absconding for the past four months and was traced to Haridwar in Uttarakhand on April 30. A court had issued non-bailable arrest warrants against him. After arresting him, the probe agency produced him before a special court, which sent him to ED custody till May 6.

SC advocates' association elects new office-bearers

The powerful Supreme Court Advocate-on-Record Association (SCAORA), which spearheaded the case against the National Judicial Appointments Commission, elected a change of guard in polls held recently. Advocate Vipin Nair was elected president of SCAORA in the election held on April 29. Mr. Nair, a former secretary of SCAORA, has been a part of several public interest litigation pleas, including those in the NJAC and the right to privacy writ involving Aadhaar. Advocate Amit Sharma, who represents the Election Commission in the top court, was also elected vice-president. Advocates Nikhil Jain and Aljo Joseph were elected secretary and treasurer, respectively.

Manipur violence: a year on, number of FIRs brought down from 11,000 to 3,000

The number of cases had shot up owing to overlap, several duplicate FIRs for the same incident and thousands of zero FIRs, says official; Biren Singh appeals to people to surrender weapons

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

A year after ethnic violence erupted in Manipur, the clean-up of records has brought down the total number of violence-related first information reports (FIRs) from over 11,000 to around 3,000, a government source told *The Hindu*.

The number of cases had shot up owing to overlap, several duplicate FIRs for the same incident and thousands of zero FIRs, the official said. Zero FIRs are filed irrespective of jurisdiction and are later transferred to the police station where the crime took place.

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh said that the people should be united and there should be no attempts to divide society. "Those who have committed the crimes should be prosecuted legally. I appeal to the people from both sides to surrender weapons," Mr. Singh told *The Hindu*.

More than 4,500 weapons were looted from police armouries after ethnic violence erupted in the State on May 3, 2023. Till now, around 1,800 weapons have been recovered or surrendered by the civilians. The conflict is between the tribal Kuki-Zo people and the majority Meitei community.

The first phase of deportation of "illegal immigrants" from Myanmar has been completed, the Manipur government said. @NBIRENSINGH/X

The government source said that thousands were displaced and due to the prevailing law and order situation, they registered FIRs at places convenient to them, which also included neighbouring States.

"If an arson has taken place in a village, several FIRs were registered for the same crime, a team was constituted that cleaned up the records," said the source.

According to a status report filed by the State government on August 1 last year, 4,766 regular FIRs were registered till July 30 the same year. Out of 11,414 zero FIRs, as many as 6,621 FIRs were converted to regular FIRs, the report said, adding that "there is an overlap of offences".

The death toll in the initial three months of the violence stood at 150, while subsequently 71 had been killed, bringing the death toll to 221. As many as 15 members of the Kuki-Zo community and 32 members of the Meitei community have been missing for a year.

Mr. Singh said in a post on X that the first phase of deportation of "illegal immigrants" from Myanmar was completed on Thursday as 38 immigrants left Manipur for Myanmar through the Moreh border check post. "Without any discrimination, we have completed the first phase of deportation of illegal immigrants from Myanmar with 38 more immigrants leaving Manipur today through Moreh. A total of 77 illegal immigrants have been deported in the first phase. One Indian national was also brought back from Myanmar during the handover ceremony. The State government is continuing the identification of illegal immigrants and at the same time biometric data are being recorded," he said.

Year since conflict, kin of missing Meiteis in Delhi seek closure

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Nearly six months after her 19-year-old son Anthony went missing upon crossing the buffer zone, Premlata Ningthoujam keeps a plate out for him even today while they eat their daily meals. A tradition in Meitei communities, the practice is something families follow in the hopes that their loved ones will return. "Every time we clear the untouched plate, our hearts break all over again," Ms. Ningthoujam said.

She was among dozens of people who arrived in Delhi on Thursday in a bid to make an appeal to find their loved ones – people who were reported to have gone missing in the course of the ethnic conflict in Manipur, which began one year ago on May 3, 2023.

A group of Meitei civil society organisations had brought the families together for a press meet at the Press Club of India in New Delhi, stating that there was still no news of 31 people from the community who had gone missing during the conflict. As the families addressed the press, a poster behind them had pictures of those missing, with the phrase: "Let them Rest in Peace, #Justice4MissingMeeteis".

In the one year of the conflict between the valley-based Meitei people and the hills-based Kuki-Zo tribals, over 220 people have been killed, thousands of others have been injured, and tens of thousands of people have been internally displaced. Amid this, while the Meitei community has said that there was no news of 31 of their people still missing, the Kuki-Zo people have said 15 of theirs were still unaccounted for.

Ex-journalist missing

In the national capital for the gathering, 47-year-old Kabita Atom said: "I last saw my husband on May 6 last year. That afternoon, he was visiting a friend and he told me on the phone that he would be back soon. We never saw him after that." A former journalist, Atom Samarendra, along with his friend Y. Kiran Kumar, had gone missing that day.

"If he is alive, then we request that he be released and if not, at least his remains should be sent back to us for the last rites," she said, adding that while the Manipur police registered a First Information Report that very day, they had not got in touch with them since about the probe.

'Chinese govt. was ultimate paymaster of NewsClick'

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

The chargesheet says accused wanted to replace Indian democracy with party-state system

The Delhi Police have accused NewsClick founder Prabir Purkayastha and human resources head of the news portal Amit Chakraborty of acting at the behest of the Chinese government, which the chargesheet describes as their "ultimate paymaster".

The chargesheet filed under anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) is primarily based on the police's interpretation of strings of emails exchanged between Mr. Purkayastha, American millionaire Neville Roy Singham and a few others (whose role in the case is under investigation), along with the testimonies of protected witnesses, which includes employees of the news portal.

In the 169-page primary chargesheet that has 7,382 pages of annexures, the police say that Mr. Purkayastha and Mr. Singham were conspiring "nothing else but to forcibly replace Indian democracy with the party-state system similar to the one that exists in present-day China".

The chargesheet also alleged that Mr. Purkayastha infused funds from China into India to stoke and sustain the 2020 Delhi riots and even the farmers' protest.

The police said that the accused allied with, supported and funded Pakistan-sponsored Kashmiri terrorists' groups and Maoist LWE (Left Wing Extremist) organisations.

The chargesheet also alleged that out of the funds received from Mr. Singham, Mr. Purkayastha gave ₹36 lakh to a person with the direction to give it further to Sharjeel Imam for inciting the Delhi riots of 2020.

Meanwhile, NewsClick has rejected allegations made by the police in the chargesheet and maintained that neither is Mr. Purkayastha associated with any terror outfit nor is there any evidence for the same.

The organisation said that the investigations by the Delhi Police and other agencies are attempts to target its independent journalism.

The Special Cell of the Delhi Police arrested Mr. Purkayastha and Mr. Chakraborty on October 3 last year. They have been in judicial custody since.

USCIRF is biased and has a political agenda: MEA

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India on Thursday hit out at the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), and said that it is trying to "interfere" in the Indian election process. Speaking to the media during the weekly interaction, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal described the U.S. government entity, which came out with a report on religious freedom earlier this week, as a "biased organisation with a political agenda".

The report had demanded that India should be declared by the U.S. government as a "country of particular concern" because of what it described as "particularly severe religious freedom violations".

Centre to train State police forces on new criminal laws

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

The Union government has rolled out an intensive training strategy for police and prison department personnel across the country on the new criminal laws and to sensitise them to the transition from the colonial legacies to a new system of justice.

In a communication to heads of police forces and prison departments, the Ministry of Home Affairs said Parliament had replaced the three existing laws, namely the Indian Penal Code, 1860; the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973; and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 by three new progressive and modern pieces of legislation – the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023; Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023; and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, respectively.

The Bureau of Police Research & Development developed a training module. FILE PHOTO

The new laws that were aimed at providing speedy justice to the citizens and strengthening the judicial and court management system were based on the principle of access to justice by all and would come into force from July 1.

The Home Ministry said the new criminal law had several new provisions, synchronised with modern-day times and contemporary technologies. They were envisaged at bringing in an era of ease of policing and justice. It was the endeavour of the Union government to reach out to all ranks of police and prison officers in the country to make them aware of the positive and advanced changes so as to equip them with the basic knowledge and understanding of various new provisions.

The Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D), a premier training and research arm of the Home Ministry, had developed the Training of Trainers' module and various other training programmes for different levels of police/prison personnel on the new criminal laws. Integration had been completed with the 'Integrated Government Online Training' (iGOT) portal to make the courses available to the trainees.

'All adverse events after vaccine being monitored'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

All adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) after COVID-19 vaccinations continue to be monitored, a senior Union Health Ministry official, who did not wish to be named, said on Thursday.

Earlier this week, pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca admitted in a U.K. court that its COVID-19 vaccine had the potential to cause thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS), a rare side effect associated with blood clotting.

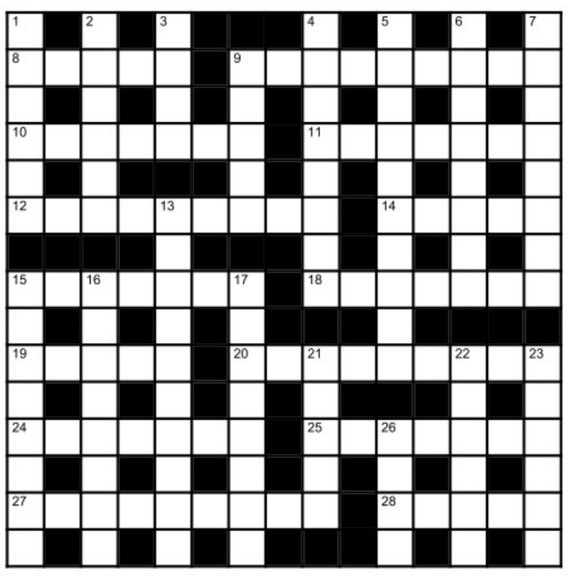
"After 2022-23, the demand for COVID vaccine dropped and now we are seeing less than a lakh people coming in for vaccination or the booster dose," public health expert N.K. Arora said.

TH CROSSWORD + 14165

(set by Saral)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

8 The best among the literates (5)
9 Auditor's private staff (9)
10 View over wing (7)
11 Sly mobs defiled logos (7)
12 Scattered and chased by daughter, spiders wandering near base (9)
14 Husband checking attractive vocation (5)
15 Grab bits of guava (ripe) fruit (7)
18 Partners returning incentives including benefit (7)
19 Second tenor with often best composition (5)
20 Used my parents' names once at first, created Saral, for example (9)
24 Troop falsely arresting journalist for explosive (7)
25 They cover, perhaps home with certain risk initially (7)
27 Careless chap beside blazing ingle (9)
28 Man driving out large untied animal (5)

Down

1 Dossier about company director on vacation is returned (6)
2 Restricts drunk son outside empty IIM (6)
3 Snowman still followed by Indian? (4)
4 Chairs before teams (8)
5 Complaint of general (army officer) diagnosed at last (6,4)
6 Harry, I've coins for bills (8)
7 Problems in note by assessors (8)
9 Yearns for trees (5)
13 Feeling it induces vomit while circling passage (10)
15 German maiden decked by fantastic set, one in diamond, say (8)
16 Adjust, say ring of intimate friend (5,3)
17 Blows up old cartel finally with dopes in shambles (8)
21 Expel European champion missing gold (5)
22 New marker is thin (6)
23 Eliminate the German behind drink counter (6)
26 Score? Zero for wrestler (4)

SUDOKU

					8		7	
7				2			6	3
1		6						2
		2			6	8		
			2		7			
		5	8			9		
5						2		1
2	9			4				5
	4		3					

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

		S	H	O	C	K	T	H	E	R	A	P	Y	
D		E		H		N		O		A		I		S
O	L	E	U	M		A	B	S	T	I	N	E	N	T
G		D		S		P		T		D		C		A
F	E	M	A	L	E	S		E	M	I	N	E	N	T
I		O		A		A		L		N				E
S	A	N	D	W	I	C	H		I	G	L	O	O	
H		E				K		S				R		D
	M	Y	G	O	D			S	T	E	L	L	A	T	E
C				S		F		U		E		N		A
R	E	C	I	T	A	L		R	E	A	L	G	A	R
O		A		R		O		G		T		U		T
C	O	N	C	I	E	R	G	E		H	I	T	C	H
K		O		C		A		O		E		A		S
	I	N	T	H	E	L	O	N	G	R	U	N		

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

8	4	7	1	6	5	3	2	9
1	6	5	9	2	3	7	8	4
3	9	2	4	8	7	6	1	5
2	1	3	7	4	6	9	5	8
5	7	4	3	9	8	1	6	2
6	8	9	5	1	2	4	3	7
4	5	6	2	3	9	8	7	1
9	2	8	6	7	1	5	4	3
7	3	1	8	5	4	2	9	6

FAITH

Dwelling places of Lakshmi

People can follow the tenets of the Vedas but cannot question them. They have been time-tested and followed by various sages and saints from the days of yore and handed to us. The Vedas teach about dharmas. Because of the Vedas, dharmas are established, and because dharmas are followed, Vedas are fostered.

Sri Anantha Padmanabhachariar Swamy said in a discourse that "*Upanyasam*" (discourse) means to bring a person nearer to God, like the Upanishads. The common cherished desire of all human beings is to derive wealth (*Lakshmikataksham*).

Karma yoga includes the performance of yagnas and giving to charity. For all these, wealth is essential. People can earn money to lead a legitimate and pious life. An oft-repeated question is where Goddess Lakshmi (in charge of wealth) will reside. The simple answer is that She dwells in all places where righteous activities and good deeds are undertaken. Rama Himself worshipped Sri Ranganatha, showing that worshipping *Kuladevatha* (presiding deity) is important.

Goddess Mahalakshmi declares that she will reside in those houses where the following dharmas are practised: guests coming to a house are well received and entertained; poojas are done with sincere devotion.

INBRIEF

NPCI's global arm to develop UPI-like system for Namibia

NPCI International Payments Ltd. (NIPL), the international arm of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has signed an agreement with the Bank of Namibia to support the institution in developing an instant payment system like the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) for Namibia. "By leveraging technology and experiences from India's UPI, the partnership seeks to help Namibia modernise its financial ecosystem," NIPL said in a statement.

Aadhar Housing Finance unveils ₹3,000-crore IPO

Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd. has announced to open its ₹3,000-crore initial public offering (IPO) on May 8. The price band has been fixed at ₹300-₹315 per equity share of a face value of ₹10 each. Bids will close on May 10. Bids can be made for a minimum of 47 equity shares in multiples of 47 shares thereafter. The IPO comprises a fresh issue of ₹1,000 crore and an offer for sale aggregating up to ₹2,000 crore by BCP Topco VII Pte. Ltd., the promoter selling shareholder.

LTTS bags €45 mn order from French auto major FORVIA

L&T Technology Services said it has signed a €45 million contract with FORVIA, a French global automotive supplier, to offer engineering development services to the latter's Clean Mobility division. As part of the five-year partnership, about 300 engineers from FORVIA's Augsburg and Bengaluru sites had been transferred to LTTS. This represents a 95% transfer success rate in securing the skills of these teams, the company said in a statement.

April PMI signals second-best gain in manufacturing sector in 42 months

New orders increased at the second-fastest pace in almost 40 months with domestic demand outpacing export orders, the PMI survey showed; manufacturers ramped up hiring at a moderate pace, which was still the quickest since last September

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India's manufacturing activity eased in April but still signalled the second-best improvement in three-and-a-half years, as per the seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), which slid to 58.8 from March's 16-year high of 59.1.

New orders rose at the second-strongest pace in almost 40 months, with domestic demand rising faster than export orders, the PMI survey suggested.

Manufacturing motors along

April's HSBC India Manufacturing PMI slid to 58.8 from 59.1 in March; was still the second-best improvement in 42 months

- Manufacturers reported higher confidence levels with expectations of higher output a year ahead
- Even as input costs rose, producers raised input purchases to the highest level since June
- Producers raised selling prices in April at the fastest pace in three months

Output growth slowed but was still the second-fastest in 42 months.

Bolstered by current and anticipated upticks in demand, manufacturers reported higher confidence levels with expectations of higher output a year ahead. Firms added employees at a moderate pace, which was still the quickest since September. However, pressure on capacities remained mild.

Even though input costs rose, producers took input purchases to the highest level since June, and expansion of stock inventories was the third-strongest since early 2005, when the PMI data collection began. Expectations that demand conditions will remain conducive to growth supported inventory-building initiatives, HSBC said.

Price gains were reported for materials like aluminium, paper, plastics and steel, and producers last month raised selling prices at the fastest pace in three months, noting that labour costs had also gone up.

"Higher costs of raw materials and labour led to a modest uptick in input costs, but inflation remains below the historical average." said HSBC's chief India economist Pranjul Bhandari. "However, firms passed these increases onto consumers through higher output charges, as demand remained resilient, resulting in improved margins," she added.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	THURSDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	74,611	0.17
US Dollar	83.46	-0.03
Gold	72,350	-0.34
Brent oil	83.20	–

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3039.60	-15.10
Adani Ports	1338.80	13.90
Apollo Hosp	5958.55	11.45
Asian Paints	2975.40	99.50
Axis Bank	1149.85	-16.05
Bajaj Auto	9110.65	207.00
Bajaj Finserv	1615.45	0.45
Bajaj Finance	6882.70	-40.85
Bharti Airtel	1304.05	-18.25
BPCL	634.65	27.30
Britannia Ind	4759.65	-16.30
Cipla	1420.05	20.05
Coal India	453.90	-0.40
Divis Lab	3964.65	-37.75
Dr Reddys Lab	6287.50	83.20
Eicher Motors	4602.40	5.00
Grasim Ind	2437.35	25.70
HCL Tech	1360.70	-5.90
HDFC Bank	1532.25	12.15
HDFC Life	576.35	-7.30
Hero MotoCorp	4561.50	18.45
Hindalco	641.45	-2.95
Hind Unilever	2226.30	-4.15
ICICI Bank	1139.45	-10.95
IndusInd Bank	1505.20	-10.50
Infosys	1414.45	-6.10
ITC	439.00	3.35
JSW Steel	890.35	8.15
Kotak Bank	1575.65	-48.30
L&T	3599.50	5.20
LTIMindtree Ltd.	4692.70	-13.70
M&M	2185.15	28.80
Maruti Suzuki	12805.35	-12.15
NestleIndia	2512.30	4.90
NTPC	369.05	5.85
ONGC	282.80	-0.05
PowerGrid Corp	313.60	11.75
Reliance Ind	2933.10	-0.90
SBI Life	1460.90	24.35
State Bank	830.05	3.80
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2582.10	30.40
Sun Pharma	1519.00	16.90
TataConsumerProduct	1091.15	-17.20
Tata Motors	1027.80	19.90
Tata Steel	167.35	2.35
TCS	3863.30	42.65
Tech Mahindra	1266.90	3.40
Titan	3568.45	-20.80
UltraTech Cement	9983.45	11.60
Wipro	457.40	-5.00

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on May 02

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	83.27	83.59
Euro	89.11	89.46
British Pound	104.20	104.60
Japanese Yen (100)	53.63	53.84
Chinese Yuan	11.50	11.54
Swiss Franc	91.28	91.63
Singapore Dollar	61.23	61.48
Canadian Dollar	60.67	60.91
Malaysian Ringitt	17.51	17.58
Australian Dollar	54.32	54.53

Source:Indian Bank

Federal Bank Q4 net profit inches up to ₹906 crore

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Federal Bank Ltd. reported fourth-quarter net profit inched up to ₹906.30 crore, from ₹902.61 crore in the year-earlier period.

For the quarter ended March 31, Net Interest Income (NII) grew 15% to ₹2,195.11 crore.

The Board recommended a dividend of ₹1.2 per equity share with a face value of ₹2 for FY24.

In FY24, the bank's total business grew 19.1% YoY to ₹4,61,937.36 crore.

Maersk raises profit guidance on strong demand and Red Sea conflict

Reuters
COPENHAGEN

Maersk posted a third straight quarterly loss in the ocean container shipping division

Shipping group Maersk raised its full-year profit guidance after reporting first-quarter earnings on Thursday, citing strong demand and longer sailing times to avoid conflict in the Red Sea.

The company, viewed as a barometer of world trade, said that shipping disruptions caused by Houthi militants' attacks on vessels in the Red Sea were expected to last at least until the end of the year, adding that growth in demand for container shipping had been stronger than forecast.

High volumes

"The container volumes we see today are quite high compared to GDP growth in the world economy," said CEO Vincent Clerc. "At one point or another, we will see a normalisation of volumes," he added.

Maersk and rivals have diverted ships around Africa since December to avoid attacks by the Houthi militants, sending freight rates higher because of the longer sailing times.

'Adjusted networks'

"We have only seen an escalation of the situation in the area and therefore we can see that not only Maersk but all shipping lines have adjusted their networks more or less permanently," Mr. Clerc said.

Maersk now expects full-year underlying EBITDA between $4 billion and $6 billion this year, compared with previous guidance between $1 billion and $6 billion.

EBITDA stood at $1.59 billion in the first three months of the year, compared with $1.46 billion expected by analysts in an LSEG poll, and $3.97 billion a year earlier when freight rates were boosted by a pandemic-related boost to demand.

Still, Maersk posted a third straight quarterly loss in its ocean container shipping division, mainly owing to higher costs related to the Red Sea disruptions.

Adani Enterprises Q4 net profit slides 37%

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Adani Enterprises Ltd., the flagship incubator of billionaire Gautam Adani's conglomerate, on Thursday reported a 37% drop in March quarter net profit, bogged down by one-time past airport dues and commercial-mining losses.

Consolidated net profit of ₹450.58 crore in the fourth quarter of FY24 compares with a net profit of ₹722.48 crore in the same period last year and ₹1,888.45 crore earnings in the preceding quarter, according to a filing.

The firm reported an 8% decline in EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation) at ₹3,646 crore.

While incubating businesses like new energy and airports showed strong momentum, it suffered a loss of ₹201.83 crore in commercial mining, while pre-tax earnings from the road business plummeted 84% to ₹222.03 crore.

Also, its unit Mumbai International Airport Ltd. (MIAL) recognised a one-time exceptional expense of ₹627 crore to make up for past payments.

Outlook for venture capital, private equity has improved: TVS Capital

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

The outlook for India's private equity and venture capital market appears positive this year, compared with last year, as 'normalcy' has returned in the lives of investors, said Anuradha Ramachandran, Managing Partner, TVS Capital Funds.

Anuradha Ramachandran

'Excess funding'

Ms. Ramachandran said, there had been excess funding during 2020 and 2021 as both investors and business owners had got carried away. The pandemic had brought about structural changes. Edtech boomed because students could not go to school and they required digital education, while consumer goods had to be mostly bought online and therefore B2C ventures did well.

"Now, the question is how do you sustain growth when structural disadvantages no longer exist. That is the conundrum both investors and businesses always faced and are still facing," she added.

'Return to normalcy'

Ms. Ramachandran observed a lot of 'normalisation' had happened among investors and entrepreneurs and conversations were now getting better with realistic expectations from both sides.

"This scenario will boost the growth of the domestic funding market. We hope, from now on, things are going to be easier for both parties," she commented.

Funding winter, set in a couple of years ago after many global funds dialed down their investments in India because of a lack of private fund availability, coupled with the global economic uncertainty.

"However, India by itself is an attractive market, and we do attract capital in the early stage investments. But in terms of return on capital, our funding markets are yet to gain maturity," she observed.

'Credit averse'

On lending to women, she said, women were credit averse and were very responsible, yet opportunities available for them could be fewer, and that could also be one of the reasons why a lesser number of women became entrepreneurs.

However, "it is encouraging to see some startups having women cofounders," Ms. Ramachandran added.

NMDC output slid 1%, sales rose 3% in April

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Amitava Mukherjee

State-owned NMDC reported iron-ore production for April slid almost 1% while sales increased almost 3%.

Production stood at 3.48 million tonne (mt) (3.51 mt) and sales 3.53 mt (3.43 mt), NMDC said in a filing on the provisional numbers.

India's largest iron-ore producer has been reporting a year-on-year decline in output since February. In March, production and sales fell. For the year ended March, it had reported a 10% increase in production to a record 45.1 mt and 16% higher sales at 44.48 mt.

"We are targeting north of 10% growth in our volumes in FY25 attuned to the growth trajectory of India's iron-ore output and demand," CMD (additional charge) Amitava Mukherjee said in a statement.

'Promising start'

"All our mining complexes have delivered a promising start and are geared up to harmonise with the new mining technologies, navigate sectoral challenges and achieve 50 million tonne," he added.

'Shriram Finance to focus on small-ticket loans, used vehicles'

N. Anand
CHENNAI

Umesh G. Revankar

Shriram Finance Ltd. (SFL) will focus on building its bottom line in a granular manner by offering small-ticket loans and high-yielding products during the current fiscal year, said executive vice chairman Umesh G. Revankar.

"We will be focusing on our niche area of small-ticket lending and used vehicle portfolio, where high-yielding assets will be given a little higher weightage," Mr. Revankar said during an interaction.

Asserting that the company's growth would be calibrated and SFL would be focusing on improving the bottom line, he said the emphasis would be to raise efficiency and profitability, and not unduly focus on the top line growth.

In FY24, SFL's standalone net profit rose 20% YoY to ₹7,190 crore, while total income increased by 17% to ₹34,998 crore.

According to him, the industry might expect slower growth in Q1 of FY25 as the government machinery was involved in the elections during April and May.

"There is likely to be some slowdown in the capex activity of the government and infrastructure projects," he said.

Mr. Revankar said though the growth may be a little slow in Q1, SFL expects good demand from rural areas in Q2 with the IMD's prediction on the monsoon being a positive.

Talking about the FY25 guidance for return on equity, he said: "We are already at 16.4% and we should be able to cross 17%. By FY26, we will be at 18%". "Assets under management will grow at 15% for FY25," he added.

'April palm-oil imports swell to 3-month high'

Reuters
MUMBAI

India's palm-oil imports jumped by 41% in April from the previous month to reach the highest level in three months, as easing prices prompted refiners to increase purchases, five dealers told Reuters.

Higher palm-oil purchases by India, the world's biggest importer of vegetable oils, could support the benchmark Malaysian palm oil futures that are trading near their lowest level in three months.

Palm oil imports in April jumped to 6,82,000 metric tonne, dealers estimate.

Palm oil has become more attractive to buyers due to a recent price correction that eliminated its premium over soybean and sunflower oil, said Rajesh Patel, managing partner at GGN Research.

Crude palm-oil imports are offered at about $920 a metric tonne, including cost, insurance and freight, in India for June delivery, while soyoil and sunflower oil are offered at about $920 and $945 a tonne, respectively.

Reliance starts trading U.S. oil setting Brent oil benchmark

Reuters
LONDON

India's Reliance has made its first foray into trading a type of U.S. crude oil that underpins the global Brent benchmark in a process run by oil-index publisher S&P Global Commodity Insights, the publisher said.

RIL, operator of the world's biggest refining complex, on Wednesday offered a cargo of WTI Midland in the Platts Market on Close process, known as the Platts window.

It was Reliance's first time offering WTI in the window, Platts spokesperson Kathleen Tanzy told Reuters. A Reliance spokesperson did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

India, the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer, is looking to diversify its oil supplies as fresh U.S. sanctions on Moscow threaten to dent Russian oil sales to India, the biggest buyer of Russian seaborne crude.

Reliance made its first oil purchase from Canada's new Trans Mountain pipeline last month, trade sources said.

More players have become involved in trading crude that can set the Brent price in the Platts window since Platts added WTI to the benchmark last year.

U.S. WTI Midland is one of six crude-oil grades assessed by Platts that can set the value of dated Brent, part of the wider Brent complex used to price more than three-quarters of the world's traded oil.

The price of dated Brent is set by the cheapest of the six crudes and Midland, by far the largest of the six crude streams, often plays a role in setting its value. The other five are North Sea crudes.

EDINBURGH

John Swinney on course to be crowned Scotland's First Minister

AFP

Scotland's John Swinney was poised on Thursday to become First Minister and return as leader of the governing Scottish National Party (SNP) after his main rival and former Finance Secretary Kate Forbes decided against running for the top job. Outgoing First Minister Humza Yousaf announced his resignation on Monday. AFP

LAHORE

PML-N leader hints at early polls to facilitate Nawaz's return as PM

REUTERS

Senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Javed Latif has hinted at the possibility of fresh elections in Pakistan within the next two years to pave the way for Nawaz Sharif to secure a record fourth term as Prime Minister. Mr. Latif's comments came during an interview with a private TV channel. PTI

WASHINGTON

Biden calls ally Japan 'xenophobic' along with India, China and Russia

AP

Japan and India are struggling economically because they are "xenophobic," U.S. President Joe Biden told a campaign event. "Why is China stalling so badly economically? Why is Japan in trouble? Why is Russia in trouble? And India? Because they are xenophobic. They don't want immigrants," Mr. Biden said. AFP

HONIARA

China-friendly Manele elected as Solomon Islands Prime Minister

AFP

Solomon Islands MPs elected China-friendly former Foreign Minister Jeremiah Manele as Prime Minister on Thursday, choosing him over an opposition leader intent on curbing Beijing's reach in the Pacific nation. Manele won 31 votes in a secret ballot of 50 MPs in polls that will resonate in China, the U.S. and across the South Pacific. AFP

Police make arrests at UCLA after clashes with protesters

Pro-Palestinian demonstrators arrested from college campuses across the U.S. overnight; police crackdown echoed actions decades ago against a much larger movement protesting Vietnam War

Associated Press
LOS ANGELES

The police arrested pro-Palestinian protesters on college campuses across the country overnight, notably at the University of California, Los Angeles, where chaotic scenes played out early on Thursday as officers in riot gear surged against a crowd of demonstrators and made arrests.

The police removed barricades and began dismantling demonstrators' fortified encampment at UCLA after hundreds of protesters defied orders to leave, some of them forming human chains as police fired flash-bangs to break up the crowds.

Numerous protesters were arrested, their hands bound with zip ties.

The action came after officers spent hours threatening arrests over loudspeakers if people did not disperse. A crowd of more than 1,000 had gathered on campus, both inside a barricaded tent encampment and outside it, in support. Protesters and the police shoved and scuffled.

Reining in: Protesters being detained by the police at the University of California, Los Angeles, on Thursday. REUTERS

Protesters chanted, "Where were you last night?" at the officers, in reference to Tuesday night, when counterprotesters attacked the encampment and the UCLA administration and campus police took hours to respond.

Tent encampments of protesters calling on universities to stop doing business with Israel or companies they say support the war in Gaza have spread across campuses nationwide. The ensuing police crackdowns echoed actions decades ago against a much larger protest movement protesting the Vietnam War.

Yale University police arrested four persons on Wednesday night after around 200 demonstrators marched to the school president's home and to the campus police department.

In Oregon, the police have started working to clear demonstrators out of a library at Portland State University.

The protests at UCLA appeared to be getting the most attention. Iranian state television carried live images of the police action, as did Qatar's pan-Arab Al Jazeera satellite network. Live images of Los Angeles also played across Israeli television networks, as well.

Sri Lanka political parties use May Day to put forward poll aspirations

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

With a presidential election expected later this year, the May Day rallies of all main political parties in Sri Lanka seemed a prelude to their poll campaigns. Leaders of various political camps made a direct pitch to the people in their respective public events, seeking their support in what would be the first election since the island nation's debilitating economic crisis in 2022.

A year into the International Monetary Fund's programme, that brought with it tough austerity measures, many Sri Lankans are reeling under the impact of steep tax hikes, and higher fuel and energy prices, amid high living costs.

Increase in daily wage

President Ranil Wickremesinghe, who participated at the May Day event of the Ceylon Workers' Congress in Kotagala in the Central Province, where many Malaiyaha Tamils, including estate workers reside and work, announced an increase in the daily wage of plantation sector workers, to LKR 1700 (roughly ₹ 477). Underscoring his government's "diligent efforts" to stabilise the country's economy, he further pledged to convert workers' colonial-era line room accommodation to "villages".

Show of strength: The May Day rally held by the centre-left Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna in Colombo. MEERA SRINIVASAN

Speaking later at a Colombo rally organised by his United National Party (UNP), Mr. Wickremesinghe said his government took "difficult decisions" for economic recovery while challenging the main Opposition party Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB or United People's Force) and the centre-left Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP or People's Liberation Front) on what their response had been.

Addressing the SJB's May Day rally in Colombo, Leader of Opposition Sajith Premadasa, pledged to implement the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan constitution, which promises a measure of power devolution to the provinces. Further, he proposed a "national wealth fund" to ensure prosperity of future generations.

The JVP-led National People's Power coalition put up a big show in capital Colombo, with scores of members and supporters marching across the city, chanting "we want a government". The party and its now-popular leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake told supporters gathered near Colombo's Town Hall: "We should create Sri Lanka's biggest people's movement, in order to bring in a new era."

Tamil parties from the island's north and east held May Day events highlighting pending concerns over accountability, power devolution, and ongoing land grabs in the region.

Crime and cost of living left, right and centre as London citizens vote for a Mayor

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

Voters in England and Wales are going to the polls on Thursday, to elect a number of local government officials, but the most-watched race is in London, where the incumbent Mayor, the Labour Party's Sadiq Khan, is seeking a third term as he runs against 12 other candidates.

The three other contenders dominating the air waves are Conservative candidate Susan Hall, Liberal Democrat (Lib Dem) Rob Blackie and the Green Party's Zoë Garbett. Also running is independent candidate, Delhi-born Tarun Ghulati.

Crime and safety have been at the top of the list for voters as has the related topic of confidence in the Met (Metropolitan Police). On Tuesday, a sword-wielding man killed a 14-year-old child and injured several other people in London, where blade related crimes are high relative to other cities. The cost of living, especially as it impacts housing and transport costs is another crucial manifesto issue for candidates.

School meals

Mr. Khan's main pledge is free primary school meals. He introduced these at the start of the 2023 school year as an emergency measure to help parents with the cost of living crisis. He is now proposing making the scheme permanent. He has also pledged to increase policing and is in competition with Ms. Hall over how many new police offers they will deploy.

Sadiq Khan

Opinion poll

The incumbent's other priorities include affordable housing and transport – but with Londoners reeling from higher costs of living than when he assumed office, Mr. Khan has the added task of defending his record so far. A YouGov poll report released on Wednesday said 47% of potential voters planned to vote for Mr. Khan while 25% planned to vote for Ms. Hall (1,192 adults surveyed between April 24-30).

Nevertheless, respondents were split on his record to date, with 41% approving and 46% saying he has done a bad job.

One of the messages of the Khan campaign has been that he will be able to achieve much more than in the last few years if there is a Labour Chancelor of the Exchequer and government following the U.K.'s general election later this year. Ms. Hall, a London Assembly member, has said that she will increase the number of police officers and introduce Borough-based policing to tackle crime (i.e., more localised police forces).

She has also said she will end the expanded Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) on day 1. The expanded zone, which imposes congestion charges on certain vehicles, was created by Mr. Khan in August last year. The Mayor has defended the expansion of the zone and has linked it to better health and environmental outcomes for Londoners.

Ms. Hall has previously courted controversy for her comments on crime in the black community and for her social media style – where she 'liked' racist posts, including some involving Mr. Khan, who is Muslim.

LibDem candidate

Reforming the Met is the main priority for the Lib Dem candidate, Mr. Blackie, who was the victim of a violent mugging some years ago. "One night I was attacked while walking home from work. My neck was broken, and I was lucky to live," he said on his campaign page.

Ms. Garbett, who reminds voters repeatedly that she is a home renter (and not owner), is focused on transport fare reform and rent control and regulation in the city.

London Mayor election has a Delhi-born candidate in the fray

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

As London goes to the polls on Thursday to elect a Mayor, Delhi-born Tarun Ghulati is among the 13 candidates for voters to choose from. Mr. Ghulati, an investment banker and strategic advisor, is running as an Independent.

"People don't know whether to heat or eat," Mr. Ghulati told *The Hindu*, describing the cost of living crisis. He hopes to bring his finance background to create funds for London.

As part of his plan, Mr. Ghulati said he would want more "bobbies (police) on the beat" . "But of the right kind," he adds, meaning they should come from diverse backgrounds.

Mr. Ghulati's formula for making housing more affordable in London includes rent-control laws in areas undergoing gentrification and changing land-use regulations. He also wants to reduce the amount of congestion charges paid by car drivers using London roads.

(Full interview at bit.ly/Ghulati)

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

Executive Engineer (C), Postal Civil Division, Thiruvananthapuram invites on behalf of the President of India, online percentage rate composite tenders for the following work NIT No.01/EE-TVM/24-25(4th call). Name of work Construction of Post office building at Kumbla under Kasaragod Division, Kerala Circle. Estimated Cost: Rs. 14093651/- (Rs. 13384585/- (Civil Portion) & Rs. 709066/- (Electrical Portion)/- Earnest Money: Rs. 281873/- Period of completion: 18 months. Last date and time of submission of bid: 23.05.2024 upto 10.00 hrs. The bid forms and other details can be obtained from the website https://eprocure.gov.in

WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LIMITED
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Regd. Office : Vidyut Bhavan, Block-DJ, Sector-II, Bidhannagar, Kolkata-700 091
CIN : U40109WB2007SGC113473, www.wbsedcl.in

3rd Extension of Time

Ref. Original **NIT No.:** WBSEDCL/IT&C/33.10(iv)/2441, **Dtd.:** 29.01.2024 of the **Chief Engineer,** IT&C Cell, WBSEDCL. Bid Submission End Date is hereby further extended up to **14.05.2024 (14:00 hrs.).**
For details, visit **https://wbtenders.gov.in** & **www.wbsedcl.in**

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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
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NON - FACULTY RECRUITMENT 2024

IISER(T)/HR/001/2024 03.05.2024

Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Thiruvananthapuram invites applications from eligible Indian nationals for various non-faculty posts (Deputy Registrar (Finance & Accounts), Executive Engineer(Civil), Assistant Registrar, Office Assistant (MS)).

For detailed advertisement, please log on to:
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01/24-25 dt 03/05/2024 **REGISTRAR**

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तिरुवनंतपुरम / THIRUVANANTHAPURAM – 22 / (फोन नं. / Ph. No. 0471 - 2564568 / 5669 / 4537 / 4545)

ई-निविदा आमंत्रित करते हुए संक्षिप्त सूचना / BRIEF NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

भारत के राष्ट्रपति की ओर से, सम्मिश्र श्रेणी के अधीन निम्नलिखित कार्य के लिए ई-टेंडरिंग द्वारा ऑनलाइन मद-दर निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। On behalf of the President of India, online item-rate tenders are invited through E-tendering for the following work under **Composite Category**.

1. टर्ल्स, वीएसएससी, तुंबा में गोको विधा से पीएसएलवी के लिए अपक्षरक उत्पादों की उत्पादन हेतु सुविधाएं का निर्माण (सिविल तथा विद्युत् कार्य) / Construction of facilities for production of Ablative products for PSLV on GOCO mode at TERLS, VSSC, Thumba (Civil & Electrical works) / NIT No. VSSC/CMG/C01/01/2024-25 Dt. 01.05.2024. **(पी.ए.सी./P.A.C.: ₹ 6858.17 लाख/Lakhs)**

डाउनलोड करने की अवधि / Period for downloading : दिनांक 02.05.2024, 10.00 बजे /hrs से /to दिनांक 22.05.2024, 23.00 बजे /hrs

योग्यता मानदंड़ तथा अन्य ब्यौरों को पाने के लिए इच्छुक निविदाकार ई-निविदा आमंत्रित करते हुए विस्तृत सूचना (ई-एनआइटी) का अवलोकन करें, जिसे **www.tenderwizard.in/isro** या **www.isro.gov.in** से डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। / Interested tenderers may please refer detailed Notice Inviting E-Tender (E-NIT) for eligibility criteria and other details, which can be downloaded from website **www.tenderwizard.in/isro** or **www.isro.gov.in**

Sd/- उप निदेशक / Group Director, सीएमजी, वीएसएससी/ CMG,VSSC

CENTRAL ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION
3rd & 4th Floor, Chanderlok Building, 36 Janpath, New Delhi-110001, Phone: 23353503, Fax : 23753923, Website : www.cercind.gov.in
सत्यमेव जयते

Petition No. 114/TL/2024 **Dated: 30.4.2024**

NOTICE UNDER CLAUSE (a) OF SUB-SECTION (5) OF SECTION 15 OFTHE ELECTRICITY ACT, 2003

An application under Sections 14 and 15of the Electricity Act, 2003 (the Act) has been made by Sikar Khetri Transmission Limited, (A 100% wholly owned subsidiary of Power Grid Corporation of India Limited), B-9, Qutab Institutional Area, Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi-110 016, to establish the Inter-State transmission system for "Transmission system for evacuation of power from REZ in Rajasthan (20GW) under Phase-III Part D – Phase I" on a Build, Own, Operate and Transfer basis (hereinafter referred to as "the Project") consisting of the following elements:

S. No.	Name of the Transmission Element	Scheduled COD in months from Effective Date
1.	Sikar-II – Khetri 765 kV D/c line	18
2.	Sikar-II - Narela 765 kV D/c line along with 240 MVAr Switchable line reactor for each circuit at each end of Sikar-II - Narela 765kV D/c line Switching equipment for 765 kV 240 MVAR switchable line reactor - 4 nos. 240 MVAr, 765kV Switchable line reactor - 4 nos.	
3.	765kV line bays at Sikar -II for Sikar-II – Khetri 765 kV D/c line and Sikar-II - Narela 765 kV D/c line 765 kV line bays- 4 nos	
4.	2 nos. of 765 kV line bays at both Khetri and Narela S/s 765 kV line bays – 4 nos	

Note:

(i) Developer of Sikar-II S/s to provide space for 4 nos. of 765 kV line bays at Sikar-II S/s along with space for two nos. of switchable line reactors.

(ii) Developer of Narela S/s to provide space for 2 nos. of 765 kV line bays along with space for switchable line reactors at Narela S/s.

(iii) Power Grid to provide space for two nos. of 765 kV line bays at Khetri substation.

2. The Central Transmission Utility of India Limited vide its letter dated 19.3.2024 has recommended for the grant of a transmission licence to the applicant to establish the proposed transmission system.
3. Based on the material available on the record, the Commission vide order dated 29.4.2024 in Petition No. 114/TL/2024, has proposed to issue a transmission licence to the applicant for establishment of the transmission scheme as noted in para 1 above.
4. A copy of the application, along with its annexures and enclosures, made by the applicant for the grant of an inter-State transmission licence to Sikar Khetri Transmission Limited before the Commission can be accessed at the website **www.powergrid.in/subsidiaries** or inspected by any person in the Commission's office by following the laid down procedure.
5. Notice is hereby given in pursuance of clause (a) of sub-section (5) of Section 15 of the Act that suggestions or objections, if any, to the Commission's proposal to grant a transmission licence to the applicant, as aforesaid, be sent to the undersigned by **17.5.2024** at the above noted address. The suggestions or objections received after the specified date shall not be considered.
6. The application shall be taken up for the further hearing by the Commission on **22.5.2024**. Any person who files suggestions or objections may in his/her discretion attend the hearing, for which no TA/DA shall be paid by the Commission.

Sd/-
(Harpreet Singh Pruthi)
Secretary

THE STRATEGY

My aim is to bowl a lot of dot balls as they create wickets: Harpreet

FILE PHOTO

PBKS left-arm spinner Harpreet Brar revealed his strategy while bowling to some of the big hitters in the IPL. "I don't think wickets, my aim is to bowl a lot of dot balls as dot balls create wickets. When there is spin in the surface, the bowlers' confidence goes up and it is a bit helpful," said Harpreet Brar after the win against CSK.

SOLID SUPPORT

Kohli is 'one of the best' to ever play the game, says de Villiers

VIJAY SONEJI

A.B. de Villiers heaped praise on Virat Kohli, saying he is "one of the best" to ever play the game. "He's incredible in the IPL, he plays a certain role for RCB, and I've pretty much had enough of data-driven pundits who keep criticising this man. I'm frustrated to say the least," said de Villiers.

INJURY UPDATE

'Nitish has started batting now, working towards getting match fit'

K.R. DEEPAK

He may have resumed batting in the nets but Nitish Rana, who injured his finger while fielding during KKR's season opener, is not yet available for selection. "He is on the road to recovery. He has started batting and getting match fit is something he is working towards," said Abhishek Nayar, KKR assistant coach.

GETTING IT STRAIGHT

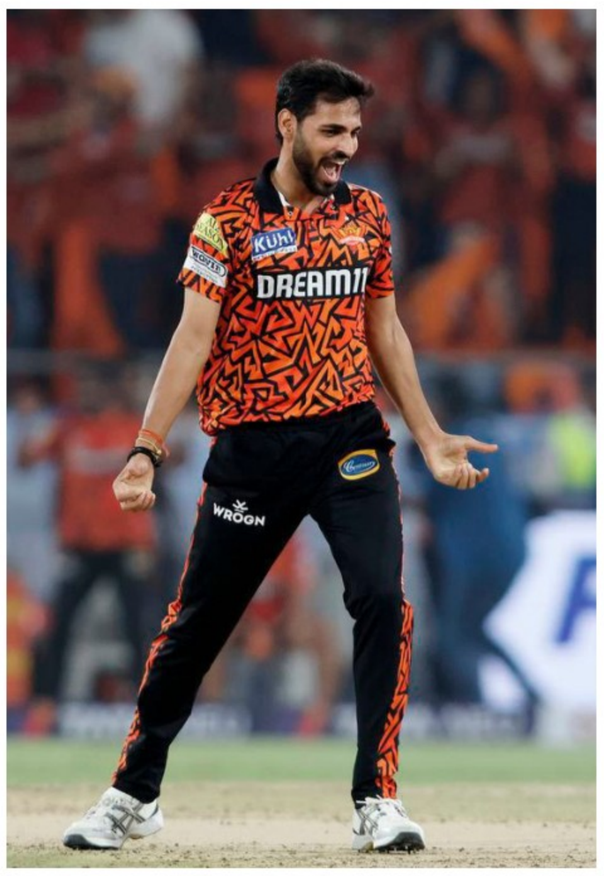
You can't judge yourself based on just the run-rate, says Shepherd

EMMANUAL YOGINI

Romario Shepherd, who smashed 32 runs in an over against Delhi Capitals, has now lost his place in the Mumbai Indians side. "Sometimes you can't judge yourself based on just the run-rate. You have to ask yourself if you did exactly what you wanted to do. I try to assess as fast as possible and try to come up with plans," he said.

Sunrisers pull off a one-run heist with a thrilling last-ball victory over Royals

Bhuvneshwar bowls a brilliant final over to complement his first; Jaiswal and Parag's fantastic stand to no avail; Nitish sizzles for the host



Home heroes: Nitish put on attacking masterclass, while the wily Bhuvneshwar struck when it mattered most. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

IPL-17

V.V. Subrahmanyam
HYDERABAD

Bhuvneshwar Kumar turned out to be the hero, striking the big blows when it mattered most, to help Sunrisers Hyderabad pull off a sensational one-run win over table-topper Rajasthan Royals, in an IPL match at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium here on Thursday.

With 13 runs needed off the last over bowled by Bhuvneshwar, the match came down to two runs off the last ball. He trapped the big-hitting Rovman Powell leg-before to trigger celebrations in the stands and in the team's dug out.

Earlier, Bhuvneshwar produced a dream first over, sending back Impact Player Jos Buttler and Sanju Samson for ducks to make an early dent to Royals' hopes, who were chasing 202 for a win.

But the visitors stayed in the hunt when the young guns Yashasvi Jaiswal (67, 40b, 7x4, 2x6) and Riyan Parag (77, 49b, 8x4, 4x6) put on 134 off 82 balls by treating the bowlers with contempt and playing strokes all over the park.

SRH skipper Pat Cummins' third and fourth overs, during which he picked up the wickets of Parag and Dhruv Jurel without being expensive, put the home team back in the hunt.

Earlier, the in-form opener Abhishek Sharma and Anmolpreet Singh fell cheaply as the home team scored just 37 for two in the PowerPlay against a disciplined Royals bowling attack. Travis Head, who scored 18 runs off 17 balls in the first six overs, was lucky to survive when a slash off the first ball of the innings from Trent Boult just flew past Parag at backward point.

Soon the left-hander switched gears, and in the company of the free-stroking Nitish Kumar Reddy (76 not out, 42b, 3x4, 8x6), pulled and lofted leggie Yuzvendra Chahal for two sixes in the ninth over.

Later, Nitish hit two huge sixes and a four in Chahal's third over and then one over extra-cover off pacer Sandeep Sharma to show his class.

Nitish's two crucial stands – 96 (57 balls) with Head (58, 44b, 6x4, 3x6) for the third wicket and an unbeaten 70 with Heinrich Klaasen (42 not out, 19b, 3x4, 3x6) – saw Sunrisers come back strongly and breach the 200-run mark.

SCOREBOARD

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD
Travis Head b Avesh 58 *(44b, 6x4, 3x6)*, Abhishek Sharma c Jurel b Avesh 12 *(10b, 1x6)*, Anmolpreet Singh c Jaiswal b Sandeep 5 *(5b, 1x4)*, Nitish Reddy (not out) 76 *(42b, 3x4, 8x6)*, Heinrich Klaasen (not out) 42 *(19b, 3x4, 3x6)*; Extras (w-8): 8; Total (for three wkts. in 20 overs): 201.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-25 (Abhishek, 4.1 overs), 2-35 (Anmolpreet, 5.1), 3-131 (Head, 14.4).

ROYALS BOWLING
Boult 4-0-33-0, Ashwin 4-0-36-0, Avesh 4-0-39-2, Sandeep 4-0-31-1, Chahal 4-0-62-0.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS
Yashasvi Jaiswal b Natarajan 67 *(40b, 7x4, 2x6)*, Jos Buttler **(Impact Player in place of Chahal)** c Jansen b Bhuvneshwar 0 *(1b)*, Sanju Samson b Bhuvneshwar 0 *(3b)*, Riyan Parag c Jansen b Cummins 77 *(49b, 8x4, 4x6)*, Shimron Hetmyer c Jansen b Natarajan 13 *(9b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Rovman Powell lbw b Bhuvneshwar 27 *(15b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Dhruv Jurel c Abhishek b Cummins 1 *(3b)*, R. Ashwin (not out) 2 *(2b)*; Extras (nb-2, w-11): 13; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 200.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-1 (Buttler, 0.2), 2-1 (Samson, 0.5), 3-135 (Jaiswal, 13.3), 4-159 (Parag, 15.5), 5-181 (Hetmyer, 17.4), 6-182 (Jurel, 18.1), 7-200 (Powell, 19.6).

SUNRISERS BOWLING
Bhuvneshwar 4-0-41-3, Jansen 4-0-44-0, Cummins 4-0-34-2, Natarajan 4-0-35-2, Unadkat **(Impact Player in place of Anmolpreet)** 2-0-23-0, Nitish 1-0-12-0, Shahbaz 1-0-11-0.

Toss: SRH; **PoM:** Bhuvneshwar.
SRH won by one run.

Next assignment

SRH: May 6 vs **MI**
Mumbai, 7.30 p.m.

RR: May 7 vs **DC**
Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

Points table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	10	8	2	16	0.622
Kolkata Knight Riders	9	6	3	12	1.096
Lucknow Super Giants	10	6	4	12	0.094
Sunrisers Hyderabad	10	6	4	12	0.072
Chennai Super Kings	10	5	5	10	0.627
Delhi Capitals	11	5	6	10	-0.442
Punjab Kings	10	4	6	8	-0.062
Gujarat Titans	10	4	6	8	-1.113
Mumbai Indians	10	3	7	6	-0.272
Royal Challengers	10	3	7	6	-0.415

KKR hopes to make life difficult for MI

Engrossing: Salt's pyrotechnics have lit up this edition.
EMMANUAL YOGINI

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

For long, facing Kolkata Knight Riders used to be like a walk in the park for Mumbai Indians, and its batting mainstay Rohit Sharma.

But even the bogey team has turned the reputation around in the last few years.

Add to it the form this season and it puts the home under severe pressure come Friday night at the Wankhede Stadium. Another loss will put Mumbai Indians' - placed at the ninth place in a table of 10 - mathematical hopes of making the Indian Premier League Playoffs up in the air.

The Knight Riders - on the other hand - will look to solidify its position as a clear second-placed team with its seventh win of the season.

The only solace that Hardik Pandya and Co. will have is the Knight Riders' poor record while bowling at its den. The conditions at the Wankhede and Eden Gardens are quite similar, with flat decks, short boundaries and dew making life miserable for bowlers with every passing over.

With the Knight Riders' bowling unit having faltered at home, the Mumbai Indians batters will be hoping to make merry, for a change. The onus will be on veteran Rohit Sharma to set the tone against Mitchell Starc.

Despite Starc succumbing to the price-tag pressure, Rohit's woes against left-arm pace have come to the fore repeatedly this season.

Rohit and Ishan Kishan will have to come out all guns blazing to match the onslaught of their Knight Riders counterparts - Sunil Narine and Phil Salt - who have been taking virtually every opposition attack to pieces.

Today's match

MUMBAI INDIANS vs. KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS
Mumbai, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
PLAYED: 32
MI 23 | KKR 9

PREVIOUS MEETING
MI won by five wickets, 2023

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

We were muddled and inaccurate with bat and ball, says Fleming

Dube. S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

Race for the caps

ORANGE

	Inns	Runs	HS	SR	100s/50s
Ruturaj (CSK)	10	509	108*	146.68	1/4
Kohli (RCB)	10	500	113*	147.49	1/4
Sai Sudharsan (GT)	10	418	84*	135.71	0/2
Parag (RR)	9	409	84*	159.14	0/4

PURPLE

	Inns	Wkts	BB	Econ	4W/5W
Natarajan (SRH)	8	15	4/19	8.96	1/0
Bumrah (MI)	10	14	5/21	6.40	0/1
Mustafizur (CSK)	9	14	4/29	9.26	1/0
Harshal (PBKS)	10	14	3/15	10.24	0/0

Sankar Narayanan E.H.
CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings coach Stephen Fleming said the pitch getting easier to bat in the second innings and the rival spinners winning the middle-overs battle in the first essay proved crucial in his side's heavy loss to Punjab Kings.

"They got good purchase and we just got stifled through the middle overs... we were muddled and inaccurate with bat and ball," Fleming said on Wednesday.

"Every match we played has been wet. Our spinners have had no impact because they could not turn the ball."

He also backed Ajinkya Rahane's timid approach in the PowerPlay.

"I thought he was good. He was probably too aggressive in terms of what he was trying to do. We have to pause to see what a good score is.

"If you're three for 30 then the game is pretty much over. We have an assessment period which we want those two (openers) to do. So, we're fine with the role Rahane plays," Fleming added.

PBKS batter Rilee Rossouw lauded skipper Sam Curran's brave call to give the penultimate over to leg-spinner Rahul Chahar with M.S. Dhoni on strike.

Super Kings, blowing hot and cold, face a steep climb to the playoffs

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

At the core of Chennai Super Kings' metronomic consistency in the IPL has been its ability to have a clear game-plan and stick to it, even in the face of adversity, and not be reactive. But the team's journey in 2024 has been anything but that.

CSK has blown hot and cold, unable to string together a series of good results. When it wins, it dominates the tie from start to finish. But at the same time, it has meekly surrendered in defeats and appeared to be behind the eight-ball throughout, showing it has been outplayed. After its fifth defeat of the campaign – and the fifth straight reverse against Punjab Kings – on Wednesday, the defending champion faces a steep climb to make the playoffs.

Super Kings had a golden chance of getting closer to qualifying when they had three successive matches at home. However, the five-time winner lost the plot with two defeats and will need to get its act together in the remaining four fixtures.

For a team famed for its philosophy of consistency in selection and playing to its strengths, it has deviated from this philosophy and struggled to nail its combination.

While CSK has been credited for reviving Shivam Dube's career by providing clarity on his role, the same cannot be said for some others this year. It has struggled to get its combination right, from benching Rachin Ravindra after a few quiet outings to persisting with an underperforming Ajinkya Rahane.

The outfit has also been unable to identify the right slots for Daryl Mitchell and Moeen Ali.

Against PBKS, the team's batting order reflected the confused thinking. After losing Shivam Dube in the ninth over, the team promoted Ravindra Jadeja to four despite having Moeen Ali, who can be aggressive against pace and spin. Jadeja also struggled at number four in the home match against LSG, coming ahead of Dube. The all-rounder has often been more effective when coming lower down toward the final phase of the innings. Mitchell, who finally found form at number three in the previous game, was shunted down.

The team has also underutilised Moeen, wasting an overseas slot on a player who is not getting a chance to make a mark with bat or ball. Going forward, CSK can ill-afford to waste resources and need to quickly identify its core group if it hopes to get its title defence campaign back on track.

In hot water: CSK has deviated from its philosophy and struggled.
S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

Good, but... Though proving his worth as a 'designated' finisher, Rinku does not find a place in the World Cup squad. FILE PHOTO

'Rinku has done nothing wrong'

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

His family was ready to burst firecrackers. But, it was not to be.

Instead of celebrating their son's selection for the T20 World Cup, Rinku Singh's parents were surprised at his omission from India's provisional squad.

Since his debut for India in the shortest format in August last year, Rinku, a 'designated finisher', has been dismissed only four times in the 11 innings he has batted in the National blues. Despite emerging as a reliable finisher, Rinku has been overlooked with the selectors preferring to add all-rounders Axar Patel and Shivam Dube. As a result, the left-hander has to be content as a travelling reserve.

Ajit Agarkar, the chairman of the national selection panel, admitted it was a harsh call without the player's fault.

"It's probably the toughest thing that we had to discuss, frankly. He has done nothing wrong, nor has Shubman Gill, for that matter. It's the combinations. We are not quite sure what conditions we'll get, so we wanted to try and have enough options," Agarkar said here on Thursday.

"There are a couple of spinners (Chahal and Kuldeep) that were included in the squad to give Rohit more options. It's just unfortunate. I don't think it's anything to do with Rinku Singh."

"It's not his fault that he has missed out. It's the 15 – with two keepers who are both terrific batters and an extra batter sitting out, whoever doesn't play – that gives us the best balance. We thought another bowling option might be handy going forward in the tournament. He is still one of the travelling subs. That's how close he was. It's a little bit tough on him, but at the end of the day, you can only pick 15." Agarkar said.

I definitely wanted four spinners in squad: Rohit

The skipper confirmed that he had stressed this with the selectors based on the conditions in the West Indies and USA; chief selector Agarkar said they had an idea of what they were looking for

T20 WORLD CUP

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

One of the most defining aspects of India's squad for the T20 World Cup is the inclusion of four spinners and just three specialist pacers. India captain Rohit Sharma has owned up to the change in strategy, stressing that he sought four spinners to the selectors, anticipating slower conditions in the West Indies and the USA.

"I definitely wanted four spinners. We have played a lot of cricket there. We know what the conditions are like. The match starts at probably 10-10.30 in the morning, so there is a little bit of technical aspect involved in this. I wanted four spinners for sure, and three seamers and Hardik (Pandya) being the fourth one," Rohit said, with chief selector Ajit Agarkar seated next to him, in a media interaction at the BCCI headquarters here on Thursday.

Inside view: Rohit and Agarkar reveal the thinking behind selecting the squad for the marquee event. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Getting the balance

"You get that balance of seamers as well, and then, you know, the spinners as well. Obviously, two spinners being all-rounders can bat – Axar (Patel) and Jaddu (Ravindra Jadeja) – and then the two attacking spinners, Kuldeep (Yadav) and (Yuzvendra) Chahal, give you a little bit of balance in your spin department as well."

Ever since the ploy of going in with four spinners failed miserably during the T20 World Cup in 2021, India has relied on playing three specialist pacers along with Hardik, the all-rounder, in a majority of T20Is. Even when Hardik was the captain for most of the T20Is since India's semifinal exit from the 2022 edition, the think-tank preferred to include three specialist pacers in the XI.

"Based on the opposition composition and conditions, we can decide who to play. There is a good chance Kuldeep and Chahal can play together. There is a good chance both left-arm spinners can play along with Kuldeep or Chahal, so all sorts of things are possible."

Agarkar admitted that it was a bit of challenge to not get swayed by individual performances in the IPL while finalising the combination.

"We had a fair idea of what we were looking for. In IPL, you keep track of fitness levels of players, but if you start getting swayed by three-four weeks of cricket, there is something wrong in your thinking.

"All performances are noticed and it will help us in the future anyway," Agarkar said.

Agarkar explains rationale to pick Samson over Rahul

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Samson. PTI

India captain Rohit Sharma has revealed that Washington Sundar and R. Ashwin were discussed for the last slot of a fourth spinner before zeroing in on Axar Patel's all-round skills.

"We discussed it a lot, whether to have an off-spinner or not. Unfortunately Washi hasn't played a lot of cricket lately, hasn't been getting an opportunity and it was then between Ash and Axar," Rohit said here on Thursday.

Axar bowling well

"Ashwin hasn't played the format (T20Is) lately as well for a long time. Axar was in real good form since 50-over World Cup when he played that five-match series against Australia. He was the player of the series, so he has been bowling well.

"He has been bowling well in the format and has done well for India. We considered all of it and that left-handed option, if we have to send someone in the middle to do something different."

Besides Axar's addition as the fourth spin-bowling option, the selectors finally gave Sanju Samson the nod for a World event, thanks to his consistent outing in the IPL.

Chief selector Ajit Agarkar has explained the rationale behind preferring Samson as the second wicketkeeper in place of K.L. Rahul. According to Agarkar, Rahul's preference to bat as an opener went against him.

"KL is a terrific player. We were looking at someone who bats in the middle. At the moment, he is batting at the top," Agarkar said.

Batting down the order

"Sanju, we like to believe, has the ability to come down the order, if need be. Rishabh (Pant) is batting down the order for Delhi Capitals.

It's about the slots we needed. We felt these two are better and have spent more time down the order which might be needed at the World Cup."

A fit Hardik gives the balance the team needs: Agarkar

Complete backing: Agarkar and skipper Rohit are confident Hardik can things turn around at the T20 WC. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Sports Bureau
MUMBAI

Hardik Pandya's indifferent form in the Indian Premier League has not led to the national selection panel and the India team management changing its approach towards the all-rounder. Not only has

Hardik been appointed as Rohit Sharma's deputy for India's T20 World Cup sojourn but Ajit Agarkar, the chief selector, has stressed there is no replacement for him.

"He has come after a longish lay-off. The good part that we have looked at is he has gotten through all the games so far and we have got another month and a little bit till we play our first game, so we know he is doing that and the hope is that he keeps building on that form," Agarkar said here on Thursday.

> "It's part of life. Not everything will go your way. It's been a good experience. Earlier in my life as well, I have played under a lot of captains. It's nothing new to me."—Rohit Sharma

"So as long as he stays fit, we know what he brings, how much balance he gives the team. I don't think there is a replacement for the things that he can do as a cricketer at the moment, especially when it comes to the way he bowls. It really gives balance.

"He will give Rohit options to play different combinations, so his fitness for us is critical. So far, fortunately, he has gone okay in this IPL."

Captain Rohit Sharma played down the fact that he will lead Hardik days after playing under his captaincy in the Indian Premier League.

"It's part of life. Not everything will go your way. It's been a good experience. Earlier in my life as well, I have played under a lot of captains. It's nothing new to me. You go by whatever is required from you as a player," Rohit said.

Stressing that Virat Kohli's strike rate has never been discussed by the selection committee, Agarkar added that Rohit taking over the India captaincy from Hardik will not be a bone of contention.

"As selectors, you want a leader. Rohit has been a terrific leader. I know Hardik had been leading in a few series before (the ODI World Cup). Rohit's form in the World Cup... Rohit's a great player. It's not as if it's forced on us," he said.

South Africa women to tour India

Lavanya L
CHENNAI

The Indian women's team will host the Laura Wolvaardt-led South African team in a multi-format series in June-July 2024.

The ODI leg of the series will be held in Bengaluru at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium while Chennai's M.A. Chidambaram Stadium will be the venue for the one-off Test and three T20Is.

The Test has reportedly been scheduled from June 28.

It will be India's third Test in six months and South Africa's third ever. The T20Is are likely to be staged on July 5, 7 and 9.

An official confirmation of the tour is awaited from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

Second women's Test

Chennai will be hosting a women's Test for the second time after November 1976 when India took on the West Indies. The match ended in a draw.

After the South Africa series, India will head to the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka and the T20 World Cup in Bangladesh in September-October.

India beats Bangladesh to take unassailable lead

INDIA IN BANGLADESH

Press Trust of India
SYLHET

A dominant India grabbed an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match women's T20I series as it pummelled Bangladesh by seven wickets in the third match here on Thursday.

After skipper Harmanpreet Kaur opted to field first looking at the cloud cover and a mild breeze, India's bowlers dished out another disciplined performance to restrict Bangladesh to 117 for eight, which the visitor overhauled with nine balls to spare.

Useful partnership

When they came to bat, openers Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma put on 91 runs in just 12.1 overs to take India closer to a series win.

Shafali got out after a 38-ball 51, hitting eight fours, while Mandhana found form as she struck 47 off 42 balls with the help of five boundaries and a six.

Ritu Moni took a blinder off her bowling to dismiss Shafali while Nahida Akter accounted for Smriti. But the damage was done.

Clinical: India's bowlers dished out another disciplined performance to restrict Bangladesh to 117 for eight. X@BCCIWOMEN

Earlier, the decision to bowl first did not yield the desired result immediately, as Bangladesh raced to 44 for no loss in the six Power-Play overs.

However, the Indian bowlers tightened the screws on the home team batters after the dismissal of Dilara Akter, who blazed away to 39 off 25 balls.

The host's brisk start was largely due to the batting of Dilara, who struck a few boundaries and negotiated the Indian bowlers without much difficulty early on at Sylhet International Cricket Stadium.

Trailing 0-2 in the five-match series, Bangladesh looked determined to give a better account of themselves and keep the rubber alive, two days after being shot out for 119 at the same venue.

With the T20 World Cup around the corner, the objective is to finalise their middle-order, which has been having some difficulty.

At the end of the 10th over, Bangladesh was 66 for two, with captain Nigar Sultana and Sobhana Mostary in the middle.

A poor example of running between the wickets led to the dismissal of Sobhana (15 off 20 balls), the diving batter failing to beat Renuka's throw at the striker's end.

Fahima Khatun was out the first ball, given lbw off Shreyanka Patil after the batter shuffled across to sweep the ball but missed the line completely.

The scores: Bangladesh 117/8 in 20 overs (Dilara Akter 39, Nigar Sultana 28) lost to India 121/3 in 18.3 overs (Smriti Mandhana 47, Shafali Verma 51).

Indian shuttlers' campaign ends in the quarterfinals

THOMAS & UBER CUP

Press Trust of India
CHENGDU

Lone success: Lakshya was the only Indian to register a win in the quarterfinals. X@@BAI_MEDIA

Lakshya Sen was the lone bright spot as the Indian men's team failed to defend its title after going down fighting 1-3 to China in the quarterfinals, while the women's side suffered a 0-3 loss to Japan to also end their campaign in the Thomas and Uber Cup Final here on Thursday.

Two years after claiming a maiden title at the prestigious team championships, the country's male shuttlers endured a tough day in office as World No. 9 H.S. Prannoy, World No. 3 Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, Dhruv Kapila and K. Sai Pratheek failed to go the distance in their respective matches.

A roaring start ended with a dampener for Prannoy as his spirited fight concluded with a 21-15, 11-21, 14-21 loss against World No. 2 Shi Yu Qi. in a 66-minute clash which gave China a 1-0 lead. Satwik and Chirag had to walk back without logging a point for India after they were outmanoeuvred 15-21, 21-11, 12-21 by the World No. 1 pair of Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang.

All eyes were on Lakshya Sen to keep India afloat, given his 6-3 head-to-head count against Li Shi Feng, and the 22-year-old lived up to the expectations, seeing off the World No. 6 13-21, 21-8, 21-14 to pull one back.

However, Dhruv and Sai went down 10-21, 10-21 to World No. 11 pair of Ren Xiang Yu and He Ji Ting to put paid to India's hopes.

Earlier, though Ashmita Chaliha and Isharani Baruah gave a good account of themselves by winning a game, the inexperienced Indian women lost to formidable Japan.

The results:

Thomas Cup: China bt India 3-1 (Shi Yu Qi bt H.S. Prannoy 15-21, 21-11, 21-14; Liang Wei Keng & Wang Chang 21-15, 11-21, 21-12; Li Shi Feng lost to Lakshya Sen 21-13, 8-21, 14-21; Ren Xiang Yu & He Ji Ting bt Dhruv Kapila and K. Sai Pratheek 21-10, 21-10).

Uber Cup: Japan bt India 3-0 (Aya Ohori bt Ashmita Chaliha 21-10, 20-22, 21-15; Nami Matsuyama & Chiharu Shida bt Priya Konjengbam & Shruti Misra 21-8, 21-9; Nozomi Okuhara bt Isharani Baruah 21-15, 21-12).

INBRIEF

Alcaraz loses to Rublev, Sabalenka breezes through

Carlos Alcaraz's bid to win a third straight Madrid Open title ended with a three-set loss to Andrey Rublev in the quarterfinals. The second-seeded Spaniard got off to a good start but then was outplayed by the seventh-seeded Rublev, losing 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 on Wednesday. Defending champion Aryna Sabalenka defeated 17-year-old Mirra Andreeva 6-1, 6-4 win in Wednesday's quarterfinals. Sabalenka will next play fourth-seeded Elena Rybakina, who saved two match points en route to a 4-6, 7-6(4), 7-5 win over Yulia Putintseva.

Amul to sponsor USA cricket team in T20 World Cup

Indian dairy giant Amul will sponsor the USA cricket team in the T20 World Cup in June, the country's cricket Board announced on Thursday. USA will make its tournament debut as co-host of the tournament beginning on June 1. Part of the tournament, including the semifinals and finals, will take place in the Caribbean. Amul was named the Lead Arm sponsor of the USA national team at an event in New York.

Momota bows out of international competition

Two-time World champion Kento Momota bowed out of international badminton on Thursday without hitting a shuttlecock, after his Japan side lost to Malaysia in the Thomas Cup quarterfinals. The Japanese, who was badly injured after a horrific car accident in 2020, returned after a year but suffered double vision. He failed to regain his form although he did win two more titles. Now ranked 52 and having missed out on a place at the Paris Olympics, he said last month he would retire after playing at Thomas Cup.

Parma returns to Serie A after three-year absence

Parma made sure of promotion to Italy's Serie A on Wednesday after three years in the second division following a 1-1 draw with Bari. With two games still to play, Parma has 74 points, seven more than Venezia in third place. Parma is likely to be joined in the top flight by second-placed Como.

LIVE TELECAST

Badminton: Thomas & Uber Cup, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 7 a.m. & 2.30 p.m.
Bangladesh vs Zimbabwe: 1st T20I, FanCode, 5.30 p.m.
IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 7.30 p.m.
Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 12 a.m. (Saturday)
Serie A: Sports 18-1 & JioCinema, 12.15 a.m. (Saturday)
Premier League: SS Select 1 & Hotstar, 12.30 a.m. (Saturday)
LaLiga: Sports 18-1 & JioCinema, 12.30 a.m. (Saturday)

Slick finish: Fullkrug gives Dortmund a slight advantage with this strike against PSG. REUTERS

Feisty Dortmund outmuscles PSG

The win ensures that the Bundesliga will have five teams next season; Mbappe & Hakimi hit the post while Dembele blazes over

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Associated Press
DORTMUND

Niclas Fullkrug scored and Borussia Dortmund earned a 1-0 win over Paris Saint-Germain in the first leg of their Champions League semifinal on Wednesday.

Dortmund defender Nico Schlotterbeck sent a long pass over the top for Fullkrug to control brilliantly with his first touch before firing it past PSG goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma with his next in the 36th minute.

It gives Dortmund a narrow advantage before the teams play again in the second leg in Paris next Tuesday, when the French champion will need to overturn the result if it's going to capture Europe's biggest prize before Kylian Mbappe leaves the club.

PSG is under pressure to finally win to the Champions League to justify more than a decade of huge investment from its Qatari owners.

Dortmund's win ensured it qualified for the tournament next season and it gives the Bundesliga five teams in the expanded tournament. Dortmund is assured of finishing at least fifth.

PSG pushed hardest early in the second half, when Mbappe hit the right post before Achraf Hakimi struck the left post.

Gregor Kobel saved Mbappe's next effort and Dortmund survived the pressure.

Fullkrug went on to miss further good chances for the German team, while Marquinhos made a crucial block to deny Julian Brandt late on.

Ousmane Dembele should have scored on his return to Dortmund when he blazed a shot over late, then Vitinha flashed a shot wide of the left post.

The result: Semifinal, first leg: Borussia Dortmund 1 (Fullkrug 36) bt Paris Saint-Germain 0.

All-rounder Saad Bin Zafar to lead Canada in T20 World Cup

Press Trust of India
TORONTO

Canada will make its maiden appearance in the T20 World Cup with all-rounder Saad Bin Zafar, a player of Pakistan origin, set to lead the side.

The team, comprising mostly of Indian and Pakistan origin players, is in Group A alongside co-hosts USA, India, Pakistan and Ireland. Canada will play its first match against USA in Dallas on June 1 and then faces Ireland on June 7, Pakistan on June 11, and India on June 15.

Saad, 37, who is also a left-arm spinner and has played 38 T20I, is one of the most experienced players in the Canadian side, with top-order batter Aaron Johnson and left-arm seamer Kaleem Sana also expected to feature heavily in the playing XI.

The side is coached by former Sri Lankan and Canadian international Pubudu Dassanayake. Harsh Thaker, Nicholas Kirton, and Dilpreet Bajwa are the only three players in the side under the age of 30.

The squad:

Saad Bin Zafar (capt.), Aaron Johnson, Dilon Heyliger, Dilpreet Bajwa, Harsh Thaker, Jeremy Gordon, Junaid Siddiqui, Kaleem Sana, Kanwarpal Tathgur (wk), Navneet Dhaliwal, Nicholas Kirton, Pargat Singh, Ravinderpal Singh, Rayyankhan Pathan, Shreyas Movva (wk).

Reserves: Tajinder Singh, Aaditya Varadharajan, Ammar Khalid, Jatinder Matharu, Parveen Kumar.

Largest-ever refugee team to compete at Paris Olympics

Reuters
LAUSANNE

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) on Thursday unveiled its largest refugee Olympic team to date for the Paris 2024 Games, with 36 athletes (23 men and 13 women) from 11 different countries. It is the third time such a team has formed for the Summer Olympics.

12 sports

The athletes, from countries including Syria, Sudan, Iran and Afghanistan, will compete in 12 different sports: aquatics (swimming), athletics, badminton, boxing, breaking, canoe (slalom and sprint), cycling (road), judo, shooting, taekwondo, weightlifting, and wrestling (freestyle and Greco-Roman).

REFUGEE OLYMPIC TEAM

The new logo for the refugee team. IOC

"With your participation in the Olympic Games, you will demonstrate the human potential of resilience and excellence," IOC President Thomas Bach said during the team's announcement.

Message of hope

"This will send a message of hope to the more than 100 million displaced people around the world."

For the first time, the team will compete under its own emblem and will compete under the team acronym EOR (French *équipe olympique des réfugiés*).

The IOC unveiled its first refugee team for the Rio 2016 Olympics with 10 athletes to raise awareness of the issue as hundreds of thousands of people were pouring into Europe from the Middle East and elsewhere escaping conflict and poverty.

The team that competed at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, held in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was already almost three times as big as the inaugural team at the Rio Olympic Games, with a total of 29 athletes competing in 12 sports.

Salima to lead as Hockey India names 24-member squad for FIH Pro League

Uthra Ganesan
NEW DELHI

The passing of baton in the Indian women's hockey team seems officially on course with youngster Salima Tete handed captaincy for the upcoming European leg of the FIH Pro League 2023-24 and Navneet Kaur named her deputy as the 24-member squad was announced on Thursday.

Interestingly, long-serving captain Savita and seniors like Vandana Katariya, Monika and Neha Goyal are part of the squad, clearly indicating that Hockey India (HI) and coach Harendra Singh are looking forward to long-term leadership while retaining experience in the ranks.

India will play Argentina, Belgium, Spain, Great Britain and Germany twice each across Belgium and England, starting May 22 and ending on June 9. The Indian women are currently sixth in the nine-team competition with eight points from eight matches. India is also the only team in the fray to not qualify for the Paris Olympics.

At the helm: Salima Tete. FILE PHOTO

"I am happy that I have been appointed to lead the team. It is a big responsibility and I am looking forward to this new role. We have a strong squad and it's a mix of experienced and young players. In the upcoming Belgium and England legs of the FIH Hockey Pro League 2023-2024, we look to put our strong foot forward," the 22-year old Salima said.

Coach Harendra is yet to make an official statement or comment since his appointment last month while HI too hasn't made any formal announcement of the same so far.

The squad: Goalkeepers: Savita, Bichu Devi Kharibam.
Defenders: Nikki Pradhan, Udita, Ishika Chaudhary, Monika, Jyoti Chhatri, Mahima Chaudhary.
Midfielders: Salima Tete (capt.), Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, Navneet Kaur, Neha, Jyoti, Baljeet Kaur, Manisha Chauhan, Lalremsiami.
Forwards: Mumtaz Khan, Sangita Kumari, Deepika, Sharmila Devi, Preeti Dubey, Vandana Katariya, Sunelita Toppo, Deepika Soreng.

Three Indians make the semifinals

BOXING

Sports Bureau

Mandengbam Jadumani Singh, Nikhil, Ajay Kumar and Ankush registered impressive victories to move into the men's under-22 semifinals at the ASBC Asian Under-22 & Youth Boxing Championships 2024 in Astana on Thursday.

Jadumani won 5-0 against Bhutan's Phuntsho Kinley in the 51kg while Nikhil (57kg) won 4-0 against Uzbekistan's Bakhtiyorov Ayubkhon.

Ajay (63.5kg) and Ankush (71kg) won their respective bouts with RSC decisions against Mongolia's Damdindorj P. and Korea's Lee Ju Sang respectively.

Ashish, however, went down 2-3 to Oyun Erdene E of Mongolia in the 54kg category.

On Wednesday night, Aryan (92kg), Nisha (52kg), Akansha Phalaswal (70kg) and Rudrika (75kg) won their respective quarterfinals in the youth category.

Twenty-two Indians will be vying for a place in the finals of their respective weight categories in the youth section on Friday.

Prarthana and Arianne in Gifu ITF quarterfinals

TENNIS

Sports Bureau

Prarthana Thombare and Arianne Hartono saved two match points to beat Ma YeXin and Mananchana Sawangkaew 6-7(1), 6-4, [13-11] in the doubles pre-quarterfinals of the $100,000 ITF women's tennis in Gifu, Japan, on Thursday.

The results:
€205,000 Challenger, Cagliari, Italy: Doubles:
Pre-quarterfinals: Sriram Balaji & Andre Begemann bt Luciano Darderi & Thiago Tirante 4-6, 6-3, [10-4]; Yuki Bhambri & Francisco Cabral bt Niccolo Dessi & Alberto Sanna 7-5, 6-0.
$82,000 Challenger, Guangzhou: Doubles:
Quarterfinals: Calum Puttergill & Reese Stadler bt Ray Ho & Ramkumar Ramanathan 6-4, 6-3.
$15,000 ITF, Monastir: Men:
Pre-quarterfinals: Karan Singh bt Kacper Szymkowiak 6-2, 4-2 (retired).
Women: Pre-quarterfinals: Vaishnavi Adkar bt Zeel Desai 6-4, 6-0.
Doubles: Quarterfinals: Dayeon Back & Zeel Desai bt Ahn Yujin & Lee Gyeong Seo 6-3, 6-1; Hiromi Abe & Natsuho Arakawa bt Vaishnavi & Camilla Bossi 0-6, 6-4, [10-8].
Aaddi Gupta & Sara Lanca w/o Lamis Aziz & Patricija Paukstyte.
$100,000 ITF women, Bonita Springs, USA: First round: Fanny Stollar bt Sahaja Yamalapalli 6-3, 6-0.
$100,000 ITF women, Gifu, Japan: Doubles:
Pre-quarterfinals: Rutuja Bhosale & Sarah Grey bt Natsumi Kawaguchi & Park Sohyun 5-7, 6-0, [10-6].
Arianne Hartono & Prarthana Thombare bt Ma YeXin & Mananchaya Sawangkaew 6-7(1), 6-4, [13-11].
$25,000 ITF women, Hammamet, Tunisia: Doubles:
Quarterfinals: Jasmijn Gimbrere & Zhibek Kulambayeva bt Diva Bhatia & Sophia Ksandinov 6-0, 6-0.

Woods targets playing three Majors in next three months

GOLF

Agence France-Presse
NEW YORK

Tiger Woods still hopes to play one tournament a month for the rest of the year, despite his physical limitations in the wake of a 2021 car crash.

"I have the next three months – three Majors – and hopefully that works out," Woods said in an interview on NBC's "Today" show on Wednesday.

The 15-time Major champion drew huge crowds at the Masters last month, but his 16-over par total was the highest 72-hole score of his career and left him last among the 60 golfers who made the cut at Augusta National.

Woods. AFP

Even so, Woods indicated he was looking forward to tackling the PGA Championship at Valhalla on May 16, with the US Open at Pinehurst in June and the British Open at Royal Troon in Scotland in July.

If Woods can manage it, it will mark the first time since 2019 he has played in all four Majors.

To do so again will require detailed attention to his physical recovery.

To contend, Woods will likely have to reckon with World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler, who followed up his second Masters title with his fourth victory of the season at the RBC Heritage a week later.

Rangnick turns down Bayern's coaching job

Associated Press
MUNICH

Ralf Rangnick became the latest high-profile coach to turn down the vacant Bayern Munich job on Thursday.

Rangnick has decided to remain in charge of Austria beyond this summer's European Championship.

"I am the Austrian team manager with all my heart. This job gives me incredible joy and I'm determined to continue successfully on the path we've chosen," said Rangnick.

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Queens Star edges Dharma Raja Union

Queens Star FC took out Dharma Raja Union FC 4-3 in a BDFA 'C' division football league match here on Thursday.

The results:
BDFA 'C' men's division:
Queens Star 4 (M. Siddharth 4, Tharun 9, Dhanush 13, Devaraj 25) bt Dharma Raja Union 3 (Wasil 21, 33, Abhinav 41).
Young Dynamos 2 (Taran Kumar 36, Vel Murugan 60) bt New Luckey Star 1 (Raj 30).
KSFA women's 'B' division:
Young Blues 2 (Annika Navneet 24, 25) bt Alchemy IFA 1 (Shridhula 45).
El Mundo 7 (H. Rasika 2, 30, D. Ragha Vershini 9, 25, Sanjigaa Priya 23, Deepika 33, S. Topsea 42) bt GRK 0.
MVFA 1 (G. Nivetha 35) bt Kemp Jr. 0.

Kreeda Kshetra has it easy against Kapil CC

Kreeda Kshetra cruised past Kapil CC in the Tiger Cup U-16 cricket tournament here.

The scores:

Unorthodox CA 112 in 27.3 overs (Naitik Aswani 44, Abhiram 3/15) lost to Holy Saint 116/2 in 13.4 overs (Akhil Subhash 55).

RKCA 103/9 in 30 overs (C.S. Dushyanth 49) lost to KCC Gurukul 104/1 in 14.4 overs.

School of Cricket 133/8 in 30 overs (Nikhil Gowda 3/25) lost to Play Smart 136/2 in 16 overs (Shaurya 67).

Kreeda Kshetra 312/7 in 30 overs (M.B. Bilal 66, Harshit Pai 66, A. Vishnu 57, Arun Hegde 3/65) bt Kapil CC 130 in 28 overs (Ullas Gowda 41, Tanshh Krishna 5/18).

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